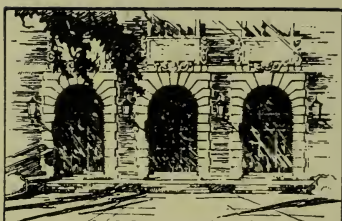



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THE
Y O U N G L O R D.

BY
THE AUTHOR
OF

“THE DISCIPLINE OF LIFE,” “CLARE ABBEY,”
“EDWARD WILLOUGHBY,” &c.

“It is excellent
To have a giant’s strength, but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.”—MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

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THE YOUNG LORD.

CHAPTER I.

“ We thought—for I was one—that we espied
Some indications strong of dormant pride.”

CRABBE.

(Letter from Captain Moore to Lord Singleton.)

“ Tavistock Square,

“ June 2.

“ MY LORD,

“ I have already been beholden to you
on two occasions, nor can I much doubt—
although, with your usual modesty, you have
concealed your efforts in my behalf—that I

am indebted to you for the appointment I have just received in India. Be it so or not, this last favour adds little to the gratitude you have already excited in my breast. Your lordship will, perhaps, be surprised at my presumption, if, in the very moment of expressing my obligations for past favours, I put forward a new request. My apology must be that those in need turn to the benevolent as naturally as rivers run to the sea.

“Your lordship may possibly remember that I have one little girl. She is very dear to me, but I am compelled, owing to my fears of the Indian climate, to leave her behind me. I have placed her at a good school in Derbyshire, where she will be well treated, and, I hope, well instructed; and there it is my desire that she should remain until my return to England. It is very possible, however, that I may never return. I put my trust in God, but I am well aware that many

perils by sea and land may cut me off even in the vigour of my days. My request to your lordship is, that you will condescend to take upon yourself the office of my daughter's guardian. It will be to me an inexpressible consolation to feel that, should I depart this life in a foreign land, my child's welfare is in your hands.

“Your lordship may be surprised that I make this request to a man of your rank and position, rather than to any of my own personal friends. My lord, my reason is this—I have observed in your lordship, and in those belonging to you, a strictness and integrity of principle, which I have rarely seen in others of any rank or class whatever. Most men are swayed by the impulses of the moment; I could think of none in whom I should feel the implicit trust I feel in your lordship, that you would consider the good of my child, and her moral welfare, before all other considera-

tions. In placing her under your guardianship, I shall have done for her all I can ; I know that your lordship will do the thing that is right, and with this conviction I shall die content.

“ I have stated my wishes plainly. Your lordship will accede to them, I am well aware, if you feel it proper to do so. Should it be an office which—from any just cause—you are disinclined to assume, I can but submit, and will then endeavour to make a second choice.

“ In the accompanying paper you will see that I have taken the liberty to associate with your lordship’s name the name of your son. My lord, you have, I trust, many happy years before you. According to all human calculation it will be so ; yet life is, at the best, uncertain, and a father must not build the welfare of his child on one foundation. My reason for requesting Mr. Beauchamp to be,—in conjunction with your lordship, my

daughter's guardian, is the same which I mentioned in speaking of yourself. I have seen Mr. Beauchamp but once ; he may not have noticed me ; but on that single occasion I observed in him, young as he is, the same principle of rigid integrity, for which his family is remarkable. I must leave it to him and to your lordship to accede to or refuse my request.

“ I have also enclosed to your lordship some papers relative to pecuniary affairs. A maternal uncle of my daughter's has left to her a small fortune, of which she is to become possessor in her twenty-first year. He has placed the sum he destined for her as a mortgage on an Irish property. As the property is well-managed, I am anxious it should remain undisturbed. The yearly interest, which amounts to £450 a-year, is placed in the hands of Messrs. —, who will invest it in the funds, to accumulate until my daughter's

coming of age. This fortune—more particulars regarding which you will see in the papers enclosed—is but small; yet, as your lordship will be aware, it is more than sufficient to render my daughter, in future years, an object to adventurers of her own rank in life. For this reason, I am more especially anxious about her, and more earnestly desirous that her inexperienced years should be placed under your lordship's guidance and control.

“My lord, I must conclude by making an apology for troubling you, at such length, on a personal matter. I am aware how little right I have to intrude upon you; but your lordship will excuse a father's anxiety.

“I remain,

“Your lordship's

“Most grateful and obedient servant,

“ROBERT MOORE.”

Lord Singleton was seated at breakfast,

with his only son and his son's tutor. He read the letter, and laid it down beside him, remarking, half aloud, half to himself—"This requires consideration."

Having so said, he ate his breakfast in silence, bestowing the consideration, of which he had spoken, upon the request that had been made.

"Shall I give you some more coffee, Hugh?" asked Mr. Horner, the tutor, of his pupil.

"Yes, if you please," Hugh said—answering with great civility, yet allowing his tutor to rise and wait upon him.

"The coffee is cold!" he exclaimed, after a moment—"not your fault, Mr. Horner," he added, politely; "but I do wish the servants would learn to make it hot."

"Let me put some water in—it is quite boiling still."

"Thank you,"—as his tutor rose again,

and went to the side-table, where the urn stood—"that will do ; only a drop or two, for I hate it weak."

"Your tastes are decided, Hugh," observed Mr. Horner.

"Yes, of course—I hate half and half."

Presently, Hugh dropped his spoon. Mr. Horner stooped quickly and picked it up for him.

"Thank you," again said Hugh, civilly, as he received it.

"If I were you, Hugh," said his father suddenly, (possibly because his son, at the moment, occupied his thoughts, becoming observant of a state of things which usually was unobserved), "I should not like to be waited on, as you are. If *I* were blind, I should suppose *you* to be decrepid."

Hugh coloured, not with shame, but with dislike at being found fault with. He had a good temper, however, and the irritation was

surmounted in an instant. "What a fine day for the boys' match," he observed, in order to change a disagreeable subject.

"Yes—shall you be down there, my boy? They will be pleased with a visit, and I shall be too busy to attend."

"Of course I shall, and see that all is fair play."

"Mr. Beauchamp is like a second master to the boys," observed Mr. Horner, smiling—"he keeps them in excellent order."

"Of course I do—I hate rows and unfairness."

"How do you make them mind you?" asked his father.—"A long whip or what?"

"No need of a whip, father. Everybody minds *me*."

Lord Singleton smiled, and relapsed into thought.

When Hugh Beauchamp had satisfied a growing boy's giant appetite, he rose and

looked out of the window. "Come here, Mr. Horner, if you please," he called.

Mr. Horner laid down his newspaper and obeyed.

"No, Hugh, come you here," said his father; "I want to speak to you. How should you like to be guardian to a young lady, my boy?"

"Very much, father," with quick decision.

"Should you?" and Lord Singleton smiled. "Why, Hugh, a guardian has many duties to perform."

"I would do them, whatever they are."

"And you must remember that a guardian must give his ward a good example."

"That of course I should," said Hugh, decidedly.

"That Mr. Beauchamp would be sure to do," observed Mr. Horner.

"Look here, my boy; read this letter, and tell me what you think of it."

Hugh sat down and read attentively. When it was done, he said, "I like the man and his letter."

"Is that because of the compliment to yourself?"

"I like what he says about honesty. That is exactly my opinion. Very few people in the world have good principles."

"I don't like that, Hugh," said his father, gravely. "You and Captain Moore are too severe; and, for your part, I am sure you are unjust without reason. I cannot, of course, answer for his friends."

"I only say what I think, father. People do what pleases them. Very few think what they ought to do."

"Except yourself, Hugh," his father said, with irony.

"I certainly try to do what I ought, father, and so do you. I try to be like you."

“Mr. Beauchamp certainly does,” said Mr. Horner.

“I am sure I am glad to hear it, but so I hope do many.”

“No, not many,” said Hugh.

“Well, but to return to this young lady. Do you choose to be her guardian, Hugh?”

“Certainly. I would not refuse for the world.”

“It may give you trouble some day, my boy.”

“No matter, father. What is trouble?—I like it.”

“If her father and your father, Hugh, should die before their time, this young lady’s welfare will be in your hands. This should be considered seriously.”

“Dear father,” Hugh said, with vehemence, “God forbid that should ever be.”

“Well, my dear boy,” Lord Singleton said, touched by his son’s affection, “I willingly say

amen; but, as Captain Moore says, life is uncertain. What should you do if you had a young lady to look after?"

"My duty, always, I hope," he replied, proudly.

"Let it be, then, as Captain Moore wishes. I will write to him to-day." And Lord Singleton gathered up his papers, and left the room.

"Come, Mr. Horner," cried Hugh, "let us get to Greek and Latin as fast as we can, for I want to go down to Barnsley, to see after the boys." And amicably taking his tutor by the arm, he conducted him to the study.

Hugh Beauchamp was fourteen, but he looked older. He was very tall; it could hardly be supposed that he would ever be much taller, but he had not the sickly look of overgrown boys. His figure wanted the grace and ease of a settled figure, but it was already strong and muscular, and gave the

promise of being a fine figure. His face, also, was probably much what it was destined to be. Every year would improve and soften it; but he already looked like a man. Such as he was, he was striking in appearance more than handsome. His eyes were large, bright, brown eyes, beautiful in colour, and piercing in expression, but too prominent and bird-like for beauty. His nose was large—a good sensible nose, full of character, but not classical. All the upper part of his face and brow was strongly made and strongly marked. The lower part was softer. His smile was open and good, and his mouth was not only well-formed, but expressed many amiable qualities.

On this boy's mind the idea of being a guardian took a singular hold. Though it was a year before he mentioned it again, it was an airy castle in his mind. He was—as, perhaps, has been seen—fond of domi-

neering ; his little ward formed the heroine of many an hour's idle dreaming. *Her*, placed under his sole superintendence, he watched over, in imagination, with ceaseless care, and governed with kind yet iron tyranny. At the end of a year, he one day entered his father's room, and said suddenly—"Father, what is my ward's name?"

Lord Singleton, full of other business, and having no call during her father's lifetime to think of the child, had swept her and her concerns out of his memory. He looked surprised for a moment ; then, recollecting himself, smiled, and replied—"I am ashamed to confess, Hugh, that I have utterly forgotten ; but, in that escritoire in one of the upper drawers, you will find Captain Moore's letters. I am sure, in one of them, he mentions it."

He gave his son a key, and Hugh proceeded to search. "Sybil Moore," he observed, after looking through one or two letters.

“Sybil!—a pretty name, and romantic, too,” observed Lord Singleton.

“I like Sybil,” said Hugh; “but I hate Moore.”

“The name has not much beauty, certainly.”

“I don’t care about the ugliness, but I hate the name.”

“It can be no surprise to you, however,” said his father, smiling. “As her father’s name was Moore, we could not have much hope she would be more bountifully dealt with.”

“I hate Moore, because I hate Moore’s poems.”

“Do you, my boy? Well, I differ from you. Some of Moore’s poems I read with great pleasure.”

“They *are* so sweet,” said Hugh, making a face, “and so loving. I often wonder if he really did think all the nonsense he writes?”

Lord Singleton laughed. "I won't defend them all, Hugh; but choose the good and leave the bad—and that is the best we can do in all things in this world. You must not hate your ward because of her name."

"Hate her—oh! no—I mean to take great care of her. I am only sorry that she has got a name that makes me sick. However, it can't be helped. Thank you, father," he said, returning the key, with the civility that characterized his manners, blunt as they were—and he left the room.

Lord Singleton looked after him, with the eyes and smile of an adoring father. His son had been all in all to him since his wife's death, eleven years before this time; and it was not strange that Hugh was somewhat spoiled. By example and precept, his father instilled excellent principles, and saw them taking root; but he was partially blind to the faults growing up with his virtues.

Spoiling, however, of Lord Singleton's kind was a better evil than over-restraint. It nourished the softer parts of Hugh's character—and, if it left evils to grow, it left also wherewith to fight them.

CHAPTER II.

“ Oh ! ever when the happy laugh is dumb,
All the joy gone and all the anguish come—
When fears and cares the lonely thought employ,
And clouds of sorrow hide the sun of joy—
Then the best counsel and the last relief
To cheer the spirit and to cheat the grief,
The only calm, the only comfort heard,
Comes in the music of a woman’s word.”

ARNOLD’S OXFORD PRIZE POEM.

“ Look out Annette dear, and see if your father is coming, this suspense is dreadful.”

“ No mamma. Poor, poor Hugh, what must he be feeling,” and tears ran down Annette’s cheeks.

“ Such a loss will indeed be irreparable,”

said Mrs. Beauchamp, "but while there is life there is hope."

"Here he comes! oh! mamma I am sure there is no hope in his face. Poor, poor Hugh," and she burst into tears,

Mr. Beauchamp, whose return was expected, was a distant cousin of Lord Singleton's. He exercised an office that was both that of agent and adviser. The property of Lord Singleton was very large and required much care and trouble. A part of it was wild heathy country, thinly inhabited, and the scattered population little celebrated for good morals. A part contained well-worked mines. In this district a town had sprung up, none knew how, and to this town neither church nor clergyman belonged. It was a part of the large parish of Barnsley; the rector of which had much work, and not overmuch income. For the time being, a neighbouring curate was paid by Lord Singleton to perform some services and attend

or assist in attending to the spiritual wants of the place—but the overgrown population as little famous for morals as their neighbours on the heath, needed better care. Lord Singleton's income was large, but there was at all times as much to be done with it as could be done. Another part was beautiful agricultural country. This part contained Beauchamp Park and the pretty village of Barnsley, and this was inhabited by as happy a peasantry as England could exhibit. A clear head and good knowledge of business, had made Mr. Beauchamp a valuable adviser to Lord Singleton, and as such he had been established for three or four years with his wife and children at a pretty house in the park, commonly called the Cottage.

Mr. Beauchamp hastily entered the room, and said, in a voice awed and broken—
“Dead!” then as he threw himself into a chair, great portly man as he was, he wept.

“It is a sad blow,” said Mrs. Beauchamp, wiping her eyes.

Annette put her arms round her father’s neck, and kissed him, and, as she did so, murmured—“Poor Hugh! how does he bear it?”

Mr. Beauchamp blew his nose and shook his head, and then recovered himself to relate to his family all that had taken place. He was a good, sensible, amiable man, not without a love of gossip.

“Poor Hugh is gone to his room,” he said. “He would not speak to me or to anyone. After he went to his room, he wrote me a few lines with a pencil, and sent them by the housemaid. There they are; there is nothing in them.”

“DEAR MR. BEAUCHAMP,

“I shall be much obliged to you to see that all is done that should be done till I have time to think.
H. B.”

“Men do not like to be seen in tears,” observed Mrs. Beauchamp, “especially young men.”

“He was not crying when he left us. He never shed a tear, Mr. Horner says, all night long. Mr. Horner was troubled about him, and wished me to follow him, but I did not choose to do so just yet. I will go up again in an hour or two. Go and fetch me a clean handkerchief, Annette dear.”

“I will take Annette,” he continued, as she left the room ; “women are the only fit people to deal with men in such cases. I suppose, my love, there can be no objection.”

“The occasion justifies it if there is,” replied Mrs. Beauchamp.

“Did his father *never* know him?” Annette asked, in a tearful voice, as she returned from her errand.

“Mr. Horner thinks he did. He saw his eyes turn on Hugh and his lips move about

an hour before he died. He was at a distance himself and is not sure if any word was actually said, but he hopes so. Hugh knelt by his father's bedside, from the time he was called till his death, without once moving, except that about dawn he got up and desired Mr. Horner to read prayers; that must have been nearly nine hours, no wonder his powers are exhausted."

"It is a misfortune Mr. Temple is away. A clergyman is much needed on such occasions," said Mrs. Beauchamp.

"True, my love; Mr. Horner did what he could, but not with the authority Mr. Temple would have had. Unfortunately, there was no opportunity for anything beyond the offering up of prayers. Poor Lord Singleton was never himself. I have sent an express for Temple, but he cannot be here till to-morrow."

"I cannot think what poor Hugh will do,"

said Annette sadly, "his only father. I mean he has nothing but him.

"It is indeed a sad loss in every way, and to everybody" observed Mrs. Beauchamp.

"The real loss is to Hugh," said Mr. Beauchamp thoughtfully. "It seems a sad thing that Lord Singleton should be cut off in the midst of so many excellent works, but that loss will be replaced. Hugh has a more powerful and energetic mind than his father had, and all that Lord Singleton did, Hugh will do equally well. The loss to Hugh himself is more serious. He has lost the only person who was in any respect a master to him, and independence at so early an age is bad for all, especially bad I think for Hugh."

"*You* must advise him, papa."

"That I will, Annette dear, but it is not so certain that he will take my advice. Whether we will or not, Hugh governs us all. Even I myself," he continued, smiling for a moment,

“though I am aware of the evil, and resolve that I will not be swayed by his fancies, I give way like the rest of them. Lord Singleton, my poor friend,” he added sadly, as if in conversing he had forgotten the sudden blow that had deprived him of a friend, “once said to me, that his son had but one fault, and that was wilfulness. ‘You all spoil the boy,’ he said gravely. I promised to be on my guard, and made a point of contradicting him about the new school playground, the very afternoon Lord Singleton spoke, but Hugh had his own way after all, and justly, for his opinion was the best.”

“Boys are more positive than men,” said Mrs. Beauchamp. “Hugh is growing older every day, and will, no doubt, improve.”

“That’s true. But here we sit talking!” he exclaimed, after a moment, “as if that had not happened which has changed the whole face of life. My kind friend, Lord Singleton!

How little I thought he would be the one to go first. He never had I believe a day's illness in his life." Mr. Beauchamp fell into a reverie. When he woke up from it he said, "Annette, I shall fetch you presently to go up to the Park," for so with the inaccuracy of names the great house was called. "You will do more good to Hugh than any of us."

Annette was a pretty but pale and timid-looking girl of sixteen. Her manners had a certain quietness and self-possession, yet she appeared one disposed more to lean on others than to stand alone. At her father's words she coloured all over with the quick bright colouring that is common to fragile and delicate complexions, and her exclamation—"Oh, papa!" had shrinking in it.

"Do you object, Annette. Mamma says you may go," said her father.

"On such an occasion as this," began Mrs. Beauchamp, but Annette interrupted her—

“Oh ! mamma, I do not mind going, except that it frightens me. I never comforted anybody, I have never even *seen* anybody as unhappy as he will be.”

“There will be nothing, dear, to do,” said her father. “Just let the poor boy talk, which he will do to a woman more easily than to a man, that is all ; never prepare comfort for anybody, it never does. That I can tell you from experience.

“No, the spontaneous action of the feelings is the proper one,” said Mrs. Beauchamp.

Annette was devotedly fond of her cousin Hugh, cousin as he called himself, though in fact the relationship overpast the bounds of real cousinship ; nevertheless she did shrink from her present duty. She could not even fancy him unhappy, much less prepare anything to say to him, and when towards evening her father came to fetch her, her heart was inwardly trembling like an aspen leaf.

As they walked up to the Park, Mr. Beauchamp told her that Mr. Horner had been to see Hugh, but had found him, though quite composed, unwilling to speak to anyone. That he had offered to fetch *him*, Mr. Beauchamp, but that Hugh had said ‘thank you I had rather be alone.’ “So Annette” he continued, “I shall send you up to his room alone. Just for this once it cannot matter,” for Mr. Beauchamp harped a little on proprieties, “as mamma says the occasion justifies it; and you must see what you can do. I never like those lonely brooding troubles. Make him talk.”

“Yes papa if I can,—” and she sighed deeply.

When they entered the house Mr. Horner met them. “I am glad Miss Beauchamp is come,” he said, “perhaps she will be a consolation to Mr. Beauchamp. It makes me miserable to see him, and yet I find myself

quite unable to be of the least use to him," and Mr. Horner passed his fingers through his hair with the action of a weak-minded man who really did not know what to say or do.

"Go up to him, Annette—Do you know which is Hugh's room?"

"No, not now. I remember the old one."

"Mr. Beauchamp changed his room when he was eighteen," said Mr. Horner. "He used to like to look out on the court and stables; but now he likes to look towards Rotherham, because of his plans. I will show Miss Beauchamp the way."

"Is he very, very unhappy?" Annette asked, as she followed him upstairs.

"He has not said much to me. In fact, he has said nothing about his feelings; but I shall never forget his face, when Dr. Roper told him it was all over, and he must go. I hope, Miss Beauchamp, you will be some consolation to him; for, though I should be glad

to be so, I feel I am none. I don't think I have the gift of saying the right thing. There is the door—you had better knock for yourself ;” and Mr. Horner left her trembling in the passage.

But courage comes when it is summoned. When Annette reached the door, she felt bolder. She knocked softly, without result ; then loudly ; and Hugh's own voice answered, quick and short—“ Come in.”

As the door opened, he said—“ Thank you, Mr. Horner, but I do not want any dinner. I will have some tea presently.”

“ It is not Mr. Horner, Hugh ; it is me,” Annette said, softly approaching him.

He was sitting very comfortlessly, as those do who are alone in their grief—who cannot care for small comforts themselves, and have none to make them care. It was nearly twilight, and the damp mist of a chilly September evening was blowing in at the windows ;

but there were neither fire nor candles. The room looked very cheerless, and so did the desolate son. He was sitting on a hard chair by the side of a table, his head leaning on his hands, his hair in disorder, and his eyes tearless and dull.

He got up when he saw it was Annette, shook hands with her, placed a chair for her, and then sat down again in the same place and without speaking.

She also sat down and waited, hoping much he would address her, but he did not.

“Do you mind my coming to see you” she said at last, in her affectionate voice.

“No, thank you Annette, not at all; I am very much obliged to you.”

Again a pause, then she got up and went near to him and said, “Oh! Hugh I wish I could comfort you.”

“Thank you, but that neither you nor anyone can do.” He spoke quite kindly but as if he felt what he said.

“ I think some things should,” she murmured.

“ Why Annette, what. I know in time I shall not feel as I do now. People get over things very fast, and perhaps I shall, but that is no comfort to me now.”

“ No ! I should think not. I meant other kind of things, comfort about *him*. There have been some verses in my head all day. I could not help saying them to myself. They comforted me and perhaps they would you.”

“ What are they ?” he asked, “ I should like to hear them, though I don’t think verses are much use.”

Annette’s colour rose deep in the twilight and her lips trembled, but she forced them to speak,

“ It matters little at what hour of the day
The righteous fall asleep. Death cannot come
To him untimely who is fit to die.
The less of this cold world, the more of heaven ;
The briefer life, the earlier immortality.”

"I have been saying these all day," she repeated, "I could not help it. They seemed so like *him*."

"Yes Annette so they are. I like them. You shall write them down for me and send them to me. Yes," he continued, "I like them. My head is quite dizzy with thinking of other things and I will try to think of this to-night."

"What have you been thinking of all day, Hugh."

"All I must do, now I am alone. I have got very nearly mad with plans. There seems so much to do I get quite bewildered with thinking, and wondering if I can do it."

"If I were you, Hugh," Annette said after a moment, "I should try not to think about these things just yet. Such a dreadful thing, so sudden and unthought of, it seems as if it must have been sent to say we think too much about this world. It has seemed so to me all day.

Yesterday he was here so busy, and to-day he is in that world we know so little about. It brings it very near."

"Yes, Annette," he said, with awe, and looking up in her face."

"And if he had not been such a righteous man as it says in the verses, how dreadful."

"Yes, Annette, but he *was* a righteous man," and he sighed, "and that is what I keep thinking I will try to be. I wish to be just like him and do all the good he did and meant to do. It was only last night; only last night, Annette, he was telling me some of his new plans; how he had been putting away money to build a hospital, close to the mines, for the accidents, and how he had been planning a kind of ragged school for the poor children on the heath, only not quite a ragged school, he said they would respect themselves more if they paid something however small, and other thing she told me, about

the people, and about the church at Rotherham, how he wished—you tell me not to think Annette, but I must; of all he said, and all he meant, because now it comes to me to do, because I am now——” he had been speaking fast and excitedly, warming as he spoke; but he paused now in a broken voice; then as he suddenly added “*Lord Singleton*” he laid down his head on his hands and burst into passionate tears.

Annette was frightened at first, the grief when it came was so violent, but soon she remembered that this was what her father wished. She remembered also what her mother had said, that young men didn’t like to be seen crying. She got up therefore with quick tact and merely paused to wish him, in a tremulous voice, good-bye, and to say she hoped he would let her come again, and then stole away and closed the door.

It was getting dark and cold and Annette was delicate. As soon as she appeared her

father put a plaid over her shoulders and said they would walk home fast. Annette begged Mr. Horner to have a fire lighted in Hugh's room, and to send him some dinner without asking him. Mr. Horner replied "Yes I will. I am glad you told me. I should be so glad to be any consolation to him, but I don't think I have the gift of thinking of right things."

"What a sad thing it is for a man not to have a mother or a sister, papa," Annette observed to her father.

"Yes, that's true. But you must do what you can. We must not be prudish just these few sad days. What did he say to you. Does he seem very much cut up, poor fellow."

"As unhappy as anybody can be," she said sadly, "and so very lonely. He did not seem angry at my going, and I am not frightened now. I should like to go again to-morrow morning."

"Well, we will see what mamma says. Mr.

Horner has been telling me all that passed yesterday. It seems poor Lord Singleton said so many things. Among others he told Hugh he had settled that it would be a good thing for him to travel abroad for two or three years; so I am afraid we shall lose him. But come Annette, walk faster. It is a very chilly night, and mamma will be disturbed if you catch cold. I will tell you all I heard when we get home."

CHAPTER III.

“Dream on, dear boy ; let pass a few brief years,
Replete with troubles, comforts, hopes, and fears,
Bold expectations, efforts wild and strong,
And thou shalt find thy fond conjectures wrong.”

CRABBE.

HUGH BEAUCHAMP had long been called “the young lord” and as such had exercised an authority more despotic and scarcely less influential than his father. Authority is often exercised by a spoiled only son and heir, whom no one thinks proper to contradict, but influence only emanates from desert, nothing

but desert can really influence; and that Hugh did so even in his young days was a proof of the powers of his mind. Now that he was the young lord indeed, he set himself to be a lord and governor in good earnest.

For a time however action was suspended. Hugh had remonstrated with vehemence when first informed that instead of going to college he was to travel abroad. Lord Singleton had adopted this resolution owing to his perception of the dangers of his son's disposition. He thought the enlarging of the mind by foreign travel peculiarly suitable to meet them. Hugh, as was natural, preferred to remain where his influence and authority were felt, instead of being lost in the crowd of travellers and sight-seers. He had combated his father's resolution with vehemence at the moment of its announcement, and had intended to fight it, on the following day, with arguments tantamount to a refusal to agree to

it. But after his father's death he submitted to the evil without a murmur; nay, although his guardian was of a different opinion, and would have preferred that he should associate with young men of his own standing at college, Hugh remained firm in his determination to adhere to his father's will.

He went therefore attended by Mr. Horner. This Mr. Horner was an inoffensive man, and excellent scholar, who had taught Hugh admirably as a boy, and had remained with him from the force of habit. A change, at least the desirableness of a change, to a companion of stronger and larger mind, had been for some months in Lord Singleton's cogitations, and of late had been drawing near to a decision, but it was a painful decision, for habit had made Mr. Horner like a piece of furniture in the family. But Hugh had never heard the question discussed, and expressed to his guardian so strong a wish to retain his old

tutor, that the guardian made little difficulty about it.

Lord Singleton set forth, therefore, conducting his tutor, and caring in every possible way for his amusement and well-being; and if Mr. Horner was not useful to his pupil, his pupil was useful to him; rousing him up from the dreamy scholar whose mind was redolent of a college, to active life and practical views.

The world, it is said, contains what you find in it, neither more nor less; for the most part also it contains what you *wish* to find in it. Lord Singleton carried his own character abroad and moulded all he saw in his travels to his own mind's image. He made his travels extremely useful in a practical way. Schools, hospitals, penitentiaries, reformatory institutions for young and old—whenever he heard of establishments of such a nature he would travel night and day over rough and smooth to get a sight of it; and many were

the sights he saw, and many the wise thoughts he carried away with him. This was good, for most characters it would have been very good; but it certainly so far interfered with the enlargement of mind that his father had desired, that the dry and practical remained the governing principle of his mind, and that wherever he went he met with the respect and attention which certainly was due to his ardent and enthusiastic spirit, but which did not tend to lessen his importance in his own eyes.

At length his travels came to an end, and eager and thirsting for action he returned to his own home. He had been absent for above two years, and was within a month of attaining his majority.

It was late at night when he arrived, but from the first moment that his chariot wheels rolled over his own property, bonfires and illuminations met his gratified and excited eyes.

As he entered the village of Barnsley nothing but his own authoritative voice prevented the crowd from displacing the horses and bearing him along in triumph; and crowds of men, women, and children followed him shouting to his own door.

“I am very much obliged to you all,” he cried, his clear ringing voice rising loud and sweet above all sounds as he stood on the threshold. “But now go home and go to bed, and mind there is no drinking or else I shall be ashamed to have come back to you.”

He was obeyed, the crowd quickly dispersed and all went to bed blessing the young lord and longing for the moment when they might catch a sight of his face on the morrow.

Mr. Horner had returned with him for a night. The following day he was to proceed to a curacy, to which he had been lately nominated, as he was now desirous to settle down

into a country clergyman. As on this last night he sat at tea with his former pupil he exclaimed "You will be very dull, my lord, living alone in this great house. You must marry."

"Marry!" said Lord Singleton, with a scream; "and when, Mr. Horner, do you suppose I shall have time to marry."

"Matrimony does not take much time, my lord—it saves time, I believe, if a proper help-mate is chosen."

"Are you going to marry, Mr. Horner?"

"Not any person in particular, my lord, but I certainly mean to marry when I am settled."

"I have not time for such things. There would be all the courting and love-making to do, and to learn how to do it beforehand, for I have no conception of what is done."

"It comes of itself, my lord, I believe, when the proper person is seen."

“I don’t think I ever shall see the proper person,” said the young lord, decisively, “I like women in their way, but in *that* way they bore me. I hate to have to make speeches and be polite.”

“But a wife——” began Mr. Horner, but was interrupted by his pupil.

“Don’t say any more about it, Mr. Horner, it is quite a waste of words. I shall be too busy to marry for many years to come. Why, all these poor people that received me so well, I must see after every one of them and about ten thousand more. When do you suppose I am to find time for love-making.”

“Perhaps not,” said Mr. Horner, with submission.

“I say, Mr. Horner, there is one thing I may as well say to night as you are talking of settling. Mr. Beauchamp said, in his last letter, that poor Mr. Temple is afraid he must give up and go to Madeira, and then to some

very mild place in England. If he does give up Barnsley, it is in my gift, you know, do you like to have it."

Mr. Horner's eyes sparkled with delight. It is true some of the circumstances and requirements of the living might have startled a man of his disposition, but the protection of his young lord's presence and his entire trust in his opinion made all such fears vanish into air, and a most joyful acceptance was given.

"Well, then that is a settled thing," said Lord Singleton, "and if Mr. Temple must go I shall like to have you better than any-one. And now good-night, for I want to be up with the lark in the morning, and I am abominably sleepy to-night."

The appointment of Mr. Horner to the living of Barnsley was one of Lord Singleton's first exercises of patronage and authority. It took place about six months after his coming of age.

His announcement of his intention was made earlier. He was calling one morning with Mr. Beauchamp, on Mr. Temple, before the departure of the latter to see what Madeira could do for him, when he suddenly mentioned the fact. Both his auditors looked astonished and annoyed.

At length Mr. Beauchamp said, "Have you duly considered this, Lord Singleton. From my knowledge of Mr. Horner, he is hardly the person to set over a parish of our kind."

"Oh! Horner is wonderfully improved of late years," cried Lord Singleton. "He used to be rather slow and book-wormish, but since I have routed him about, he is quite another man. You don't know what a change I have made."

"Routing about may have done a great deal, certainly," said Mr. Beauchamp, "but some defects are constitutional, and I don't believe routing does them much good. Horner

has no spirit or independence. I should never trust his judgment."

"That's all changed," said Lord Singleton, "I made him look after the accounts in our travels; and you can't think what good it did him. It was a great sacrifice, on my part, for I like to do all that myself, but I saw it was just what was wanted to make a man of him. He has a capital head for calculation now."

Mr. Beauchamp smiled and said, "Well, I suppose you know best. Education does wonders for us all."

Mr Temple said nothing, but when Mr. Beauchamp went, he begged Lord Singleton to remain.

"I wish to say a word about Mr. Horner," he said. "I am sorry for what you have decided; you must consider, Lord Singleton, how serious a thing the appointment of a clergyman is."

“That I know well, Mr. Temple, don’t suppose I forget it, but I really do think I am doing right in appointing Mr. Horner. He is as good a man as ever lived. Thoroughly religious and conscientious. If anybody has a right to say he knows a man, surely I know Mr. Horner.”

“Of his goodness and conscientiousness” said Mr. Temple, “I have no doubt, but other things are required. A place for everything and everything in its place. Mr. Horner would do well at such a place as Hitching, but not here.”

“What I want” said Lord Singleton, “since you must go, Mr. Temple, is a man who will help me in what I want to do, and that I know Mr. Horner will, for he knows my plans as well as I do myself.”

“That may be what *you* want, Lord Singleton,” said Mr. Temple, gravely, “but not what the parish wants. Without meaning to

praise myself, for our qualities are gifts not merits, I know that I am a person of a far stronger and firmer mind than Mr. Horner, and yet I assure you I have often found my position a difficult one. There are strong and firm minds in this parish to deal with."

"If there is a difficulty, Mr. Horner must come to me. It will be my hope and wish to give him all the help I can. We will work together."

"And you, Lord Singleton," continued Mr. Temple, in the same grave tone, "who is to advise, and if needful, to rebuke and exhort you? Forgive me if I say so, but I think at your age you require an adviser."

"I am sure, Mr. Temple," replied the young lord, good-temperedly, "I shall always be ready to take advice and, I hope, rebuke also, whenever I want it. What I wish is to do right, and I am very much obliged to you

for speaking about this so freely. If I could, I would consider it over again, but the fact is I told Horner that if you were obliged to go, it should be a settled thing, and I must stick to my word."

"If you have made a promise there is no more to be said. I will only say farther, Lord Singleton, that you are very young, and in such matters I think it would be wiser to consult with those who are more experienced. Remember how many human beings, how many immortal souls depend for their welfare on such a decision as this."

Lord Singleton thanked him, promised more consideration for the future, and expressed most affectionate regret that he must lose his good advice. And it was a loss. Mr. Temple was the only person who kept his mind unbiassed in his notions of what was best, by the prepossessions of the young lord. In the appointment of Mr. Horner, Lord Singleton appointed a good

man certainly, but one utterly subservient to and dependant on him. He obtained another slave and worshipper.

CHAPTER IV.

“The sun upon no happier shone,
Nor prouder man than Eustace Grey,
Ask where you would and all would say,
The man admired and praised of all,
By rich and poor, and grave and gay,
Was the young Lord of Greyling Hall.”
CRABBE.

WHERE is Mr. Beauchamp?” asked Lord Singleton, suddenly entering the Cottage one morning, early. “I want his advice about a matter of some importance.”

It was three years from the date of the last chapter, and Lord Singleton was now four and twenty. Mentally and bodily, he was probably

what he was destined to be. The mental qualities this tale will unfold—the bodily ones need little description. In some respects he was handsomer than his early youth had promised—his tall figure, athletic as it was, had more grace, his large features had softened; but with some improvement there was a slight counterbalancing defect. When heated with argument or chafed with resistance, his brows had a habit of contracting, and as it was not seldom that his temper was vexed, even by those most disposed to yield to his despotic sway this contraction had left by habit a furrow between his eyes. It was the only unpleasing expression in his good-tempered and animated countenance.

“He is in his office,” replied Mrs Beauchamp. “Zoé,” to her little girl, “go and call him hither.”

“No, Zoé, sit still. I will go to him myself. Annette,” continued Lord Singleton,

turning to her, "have you copied that bit for me?"

"Yes, I finished it last night. I will fetch it in a moment,"—Annette flew up stairs and returned with it.

"Thank you," as he looked over a paper; "this is very nicely done. Men and women and children, all divided, six hundred in all. I never should have thought there were so many on the heath; and, sad to say, all the children almost little vagabonds. What a thing it will be when the school opens."

"When will it open?" asked Annette. "I am tired of expecting it."

"In a fortnight, certainly, so Mason has promised, and I shall see that he keeps his word. It will be a great day; we will have a dinner and celebration. I will drive you over, Annette. May I, Mrs. Beauchamp?"

"Annette shall certainly go, but, probably, I or Mr. Beauchamp will take her ourselves."

“Very well. So as she goes no matter how. I say, Annette, should I be giving you too much trouble if I ask you to copy this for me. Horner gave it me last night, and wants to have it back again, and I really don’t know when I shall have time to look at it.”

“I will do it directly,” Annette said, quickly.

“What a dirty book,” observed Mrs. Beauchamp, as he took a torn, filthy club list from his pocket. “You had better cover it, Annette.”

“Do you mind Annette writing so much,” Lord Singleton asked, remarking that she spoke coldly.

“When your school is opened I hope you will be more at leisure, and then I certainly shall be glad if Annette pays more attention to accomplishments than she can do while she is so much employed.”

“Why, Mrs. Beauchamp!” he exclaimed,

eagerly, "what are accomplishments compared to the reformation of these poor little vagabonds. Annette is really useful now."

"I confess I like young ladies to be accomplished," said Mrs. Beauchamp, in her dry way. "Accomplishments are a very great resource to a woman's life. Annette may not always be as much employed and interested, as she now is, and she will then regret that she neglected them. She scarcely ever draws or reads her German now."

"When I am a little less busy, Annette and I will learn German together. Can you wait till then, Annette?"

"Annette likes to write for you much better than doing German," said Zoé, looking up from some stitching her mother had set her to do.

Mrs. Beauchamp was about to reprove her little girl for an indecorous speech, but she perceived there was no need. Annette laughed

without concealment, and said, "I believe that is true, Zoé; but I mean to do a great deal of German in the winter."

And Lord Singleton patted Zoé's head, and said—"Thank you—that's a good girl, Zoé; now I need not be afraid of troubling Annette any more. Always tell your friends truths they like to hear. Good morning, Mrs. Beauchamp. I really do apologise for that filthy book; but you must scold Mr. Horner, not me. I often tell him he is a sloven."

The terms of intimacy on which Lord Singleton and Annette were placed had gradually grown up. On his first return from abroad, he had begun to ask her assistance on many small matters, but at first only occasionally, and always with apologies. His requests had year by year increased, and with their increase his apologies had lessened. Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamp, foreseeing some danger to their daughter in this state of things, had spoken

much in private of putting an end to it ; but this, though easy to say in general terms, was difficult when the separate requests were made.

The intended refusal was always a future, not a present thing ; and, when at last the frequency of intercourse, and amount of assistance required did need their interference, the time was passed, and the idea of it had faded away. Such is the power of habit, that what is a daily habit is scarcely remarked upon, and rarely considered as an evil.

The friendship of Lord Singleton and Miss Beauchamp was known in the neighbourhood, and commented on. During the first year of its continuance, a marriage was announced every alternate week. Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamp had some suspicion of a *dénouement* of the same kind ; and, though in no degree self-interested, or capable of taking any step to forward such an event, they naturally thought

with pleasure of so happy a destiny for their child. All such ideas had, however, after one year, died away. Matrimony had evidently no part in the young lord's thoughts; he treated Annette and claimed her assistance as simply as if she were his sister; although, at the same time, he permitted himself no undue familiarities, and submitted without opposition to the common maxims of decorum enforced by Mrs. Beauchamp.

On his return from abroad, he observed that she called him Lord Singleton, and one day commented on it. "This is new, is it not, Annette?—you used to call me Hugh."

"Yes," she replied, "but mamma desired me to change. I found it difficult at first, but now I don't."

"I suppose she is right," he said. "When I have time to practise it, I will learn to call you Miss Beauchamp; but you must be Annette till then;" and, as the time never

allowed the practice, Annette she still was, and was likely to be.

Lord Singleton went in search of Mr. Beauchamp, and found him busy in the office — or large uncomfortable room — where he transacted his affairs.

“Are you very busy, Mr. Beauchamp?” he asked, “for I want to talk to you. Of course I can wait, but I had rather not.”

“My business can easily wait,” he replied ; “do you wish to speak to me alone ?”

“Yes, if I can ; it is on a private matter.”

“Then go, Holland,” to his clerk, “and take James Gregory, and bring him back in half an hour.”

“That will be no pain to James Gregory,” said Lord Singleton, nodding to the man, with a smile. “He likes waiting better than working.—Now Mr. Beauchamp,” and as he spoke he drew a chair to the table, and some paper from his pocket, “I want your advice upon a

question of some difficulty. "Did I ever tell you that I was guardian to a young lady?"

"No, my dear lord, never."

"That is singular, for once I thought a good deal about it—of late I have certainly forgotten.—I and my father were both made guardians to a little girl, in the event of her father's death. That event has taken place; I have received no end of letters and papers this morning, and among others, a very pathetic one from the poor man, expressing some wishes, and telling me he dies happy, in the conviction I shall do my duty to his child, or which comes to the same thing, that I shall see it done. He gives me, in fact, full powers over her, to do what I please, be her guardian and trustee, or choose a new one. That is out of the question; where a man is trusted, his duty he must do. I shall do my duty, of course. There are one or two letters, just look them over and give me your advice."

“How old is the child?”

“About sixteen, an age that requires a great deal of care.”

“An age, my dear lord, that makes surveillance on your part so difficult, that I think it would be better to give a share, at least, of your authority, into the hands of some person of maturer years.”

“Not for the world,” said the young lord, vehemently. “In the first place, it would be a shame, when I am perfectly capable, because, as you will see, the poor man depended on my interference, and in the second place, I will never give up any opportunity of doing good that comes in my way as long as I live. Now be so good, Mr. Beauchamp, as to read these letters, and then give me your advice as to what I shall do.”

Mr. Beauchamp put on some spectacles, and proceeded to the inspection of the letters, Lord Singleton impatiently rapping his foot against the floor during the process.

“Well,” he cried, at the first pause, “what do you advise me to do with the young lady?”

“My advice,” replied Mr. Beauchamp, looking as wise as if he did truly expect his advice was to be taken, “is, that at present you leave the young lady where she is. Sixteen . . . it is too early for her education to be properly finished, and a year and a half, or two years, may well pass, before you make any change in her mode of life. During that time, you can make enquiries regarding her personal friends, and satisfy yourself as to the most proper person to be entrusted with her for the future.

“No—no, Mr. Beauchamp,” said the young lord, decidedly, “this will never do. I hate girls’ schools. A parcel of girls together are always missish and vulgar; and if this poor man was to die at all, I am glad that it has happened now, when the girl can be saved from such evils.”

“What then should you propose to do.

You cannot act the guardian, indeed, you cannot have her actually in your own charge."

"Why, no, I suppose not. That is what I should like best, but the world is censorious and one must be more or less a slave to the world."

"Without great censoriousness," said Mr. Beauchamp, smiling, "the world might be excused for censuring in such a case. It would not be decorous. But you may marry, my dear lord, and I wish with all my heart you would, and then you could do as you pleased."

"Marry, Mr. Beauchamp! and what on earth should I do with a wife; and for what possible reason can you wish me to be married?"

"Partly for your own sake, and partly that I do not like your cousin, Lowry Beauchamp. I should be glad to see an heir from the right stock."

"Ah! I confess I sometimes think of that ;

but Lowry will improve ; or if not, it is no good reason for my being hampered with a wife against my will."

"No, certainly not against your will. But is your heart so hard that it is impossible you could make a free choice?"

"I believe it is, I never was made to be a ladies' man. But what has this to do with the matter in hand. I am not married, and my ward has not a home,—you see the man says she has no near relations, poor child. What is to be done with her?"

"What is your own proposal, Lord Singleton? I am sure you have one, and no doubt it is a wise and good one."

"Well, Mr. Beauchamp," said Lord Singleton, with some hesitation, "since you will not propose it, I will speak out what I have in my mind. But I depend on you not to be influenced by what I wish in the smallest degree. I was thinking that if you would allow

me to board and lodge her at your house, she would be under my own eye in great things, and, what is far better, she would be under Mrs. Beauchamp's eye for her daily conduct. Mrs. Beauchamp would look after her health, and manners, and from whom could she learn to be a good useful woman so well as from Annette? I have fairly told you what I wish. Now tell me as fairly whether you object to it."

Mr. Beauchamp stroked his chin for some moments, then observed—

"I must talk to Mrs. Beauchamp; undoubtedly it would be a good plan so far as the young lady is concerned, but I must talk to Mrs. Beauchamp. I will talk it over with her to-night."

"Should I be giving you too much trouble if I ask you to go and talk it over with her now. I like these things to be settled off hand. Where there are difficulties to be got

over, pondering and reflection is useful, but the only question here is whether you think it a bore ; and this your own feeling and Mrs. Beauchamp's will tell you in one minute as easily as in four hundred. I will wait here as long as you please."

"I believe, my dear lord, I shall make no great objection to your proposal. We have often wished for a companion for Annette, and this appears to be an opportunity to provide one. The only thing I should suggest would be, that she should come as a visitor at first. She may be a well-behaved young lady, such as one should be willing at any rate to cultivate, but we have no certainty of this ; she may be very much the reverse, and if so, we should, of course, be unwilling to expose Annette, or even Zoe, to her influence."

"Whatever she is, she is my ward," said the young lord, "and I must look after her ; but I see the truth of what you say. Be so

good, however, as to go and ask Mrs. Beauchamp's consent to receive her as a visitor, and if this plan fails, I must make Horner take to himself the wife he has so long pictured to his fancy. Don't hurry Mrs. Beauchamp, talk it well over, and by all means speak as you feel, and don't allow my wishes to influence you I beg; though, you may tell her they are very strong. I will wait here till you come back."

The conference between Mr. Beauchamp and his wife need not be detailed. There never was a doubt how it would end. Mr. Beauchamp, fond of society and conversation became in the short interval between leaving the office and entering the drawing-room (in addition to his desire to please Lord Singleton) sincerely anxious to receive the proposed guest into his house; and the plan, as laid before Mrs. Beauchamp, was coloured by the imagination of the proposer. Mrs. Beauchamp,

dry and clear-headed, saw a thousand objections, and stated them in her matter-of-fact way ; but she was in her heart as desirous to please Lord Singleton as her husband, and perhaps, was in her way, equally fond of a novelty. Her objections were, therefore, bare statements, expressed, as some unconsciously do, to display their wisdom, by foretelling every unpleasant conclusion which might hereafter possibly spring out of the affair. In point of fact, her consent was given at once, and so Mr. Beauchamp saw.

When he returned to the office with his own and his wife's acquiescence, Lord Singleton expressed his gratitude with much eagerness. "Indeed, Mr. Beauchamp," he added, "if you had not consented, I should have been at my wit's end. I have no doubt Horner would have married, if I had said it must be so ; but with his *penchant* for being governed, he must marry a she-dragon, and I should have been

sorry to put my poor young ward into such a person's charge. I am extremely obliged to you and Mrs. Beauchamp, pray tell her so, for I have not time to go back. I must write my letters with all speed, and I hope we shall see our plans brought to a successful issue."

With all speed he hastened to open his correspondence with Mrs. Hurlstone, the lady under whose charge Miss' Moore had been brought up. His letter began by shortly stating the circumstances, under which he assumed the guardianship of her pupil and the plans he proposed for her future life. It ended thus—

"Lord Singleton will be much obliged to Mrs. Hurlstone to inform Miss Moore of his decision, and since he thinks it best that her removal to Mr. Beauchamp's house should take place without much delay, he begs to know at what time within the next month he shall make arrangements for her journey. It

will give him pleasure to attend to her wishes in every possible way."

Within a few days he received the following answer :—

" MY LORD,

" I am requested by Miss Moore to express to your lordship her thanks for the trouble you have taken in making arrangements for her future comfort. At the same time she desires me to say, that she much prefers that no alteration should be made in her present mode of life, and will gladly pass the next few years under my roof. As I think the desire she expresses will be also conducive to her welfare, moral and physical, I have no hesitation in making it known to your lordship. In the hope that our wishes will meet with your Lordship's approbation,

" I remain, my lord,

" Your obedient servant,

" HENRIETTA HURLSTONE."

Lord Singleton knitted his brows for a moment over this letter, then without taking counsel of any one replied to it.

“MADAM,

“I am extremely sorry that I cannot agree to the wish Miss Moore has expressed. The decision at which I arrived was made after mature consideration, and, as it appears to me, on every account to be the best, I am unable to relinquish it. Certain duties have been imposed upon me, and it will be my earnest endeavour to perform them. Miss Moore may, at the same time, be assured that all is done with a view to her welfare, and with an anxious desire to secure her happiness. Under these circumstances, I must again beg you to let me know at what time, within a few weeks, it will be agreeable to Miss Moore to remove from your house to that of Mr. Beauchamp. I remain, madam,

“Your much obliged,

“SINGLETON.”

By return of post this letter was answered.

“ Miss Moore, presents her compliments to Lord Singleton and begs to inform him that she can by no means consent to leave the house in which she has lived since her childhood. She thanks him for the trouble he takes in her affairs, but thinks it best to say at once, that with her own personal arrangements she cannot admit his interference. In all else she will be grateful for his help, and will endeavour to be guided by his wishes.”

“ They must have put her up to this,” said Lord Singleton to himself, as he frowned over the letter. “ Mrs. Hurlstone is, no doubt, a selfish, interested person, anxious to keep any one, by fair means or by foul, in her house ; but I am quite resolved. I hate girls’-schools and school-girls, and my ward shall be saved from interested people. I am not to be trifled with

—they shall see that ;” and he wrote again—

“ DEAR MISS MOORE,—

“I am very sorry that our acquaintance should begin with a difference of opinion. When you know me better, I hope you will trust me more, and that this first difference will be the last. It is with great regret I refuse your request ; but, as I have good reasons, I am compelled to do it. I hope you believe my assurance, that I have taken every means to secure your comfort and happiness, and that it is only a sense of duty that forces me to act in opposition to your will.

“ Since writing my first letters, however, it has occurred to me, that it may probably be a consolation to you at the present moment to remain in the society of those to whom you are accustomed. I am sorry this did not occur to me before. I will not, therefore, press your removal at so early a period as I first mentioned, but shall hope to find you

more willing to acquiesce in my decision in three months' time. Early in December, Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamp will be prepared to receive you.

“ I remain,

“ Dear Miss Moore,

“ Sincerely yours,

“ SINGLETON.”

A short letter of acquiescence from Mrs. Hurlstone closed the correspondence.

Like a wise ruler, Lord Singleton made a concession in time; and though the victory was, in fact, on his side, there was a consoling sense of triumph in the defeated party.

CHAPTER V.

“Now of my ward discourse. How does she?”

THE HUNCHBACK.

EARLY in December, Mr. Beauchamp set off to London, to meet his new charge. She was to pass a few days in London at the house of an acquaintance, and from thence Mr. Beauchamp was to conduct her to her future abode.

As he was about to leave his house, Lord Singleton entered. “Not gone, Mr. Beauchamp?” he exclaimed; “I am glad of that; now we will go together; send away that fly, and get into my carriage. I am going to Paris.”

“To Paris!” cried Annette; “then you will not be here when Miss Moore comes.”

“I am afraid not, but it can’t be helped. My old uncle, Sir Henry Vincent, is ill, and wishes to see me; and, poor old fellow, I am sure I will not disappoint him. I cannot say the time is particularly convenient to me in any way; but neither is it, I dare say, a pleasure to him to be ill—so we must not complain of such things. Give my compliments to Miss Moore, and all that sort of thing—you will know what I ought to say—and when she has been here a day or two, write and tell me what you think of her; that is, will you, Mrs. Beauchamp—I know I dare not take such a liberty with Annette—and be so good as to tell me any other piece of news, and how Horner’s toothache is? One ought not to laugh at a man with a toothache; but he was such a helpless, miserable object yesterday, I could hardly help it.”

“I will write with great pleasure,” said Mrs. Beauchamp.

“I hope you will like Miss Moore. You must make her very happy, Annette. Whatever she may be—even if she be as black as a blackamoor—be kind to her, for my sake.”

“That I will,” said Annette.

“You may depend on our exertions,” said Mrs. Beauchamp.

And the young lord departed.

Towards six o'clock, two days afterwards, Annette and Mrs. Beauchamp sat expecting the new inmate of their quiet home. Annette's feelings were all pleasurable. Youth naturally expects sympathy and gratification from the companionship of youth. The imagination in early years draws vivid and alluring pictures of a stranger. Even later in life, when often disappointment has proved that men and women in general are not heroes and heroines : a stranger's coming excites the fancy, and

makes it eager and romantic. Besides this, Lord Singleton was the actor and mover of the present arrival, and that was more than enough to give it interest in Annette's eyes. It was not to be expected that Mrs. Beauchamp's anticipations should be as sunny as her daughter's. In the first place, she had no imagination. If ever gifted with such a property, it had been exhausted for ever in the effort of naming her two children. Secondly, her experienced mind suggested many natural fears and dreads regarding the being who was to take a child's place among them. These chiefly, however, resolved themselves into one super-eminent terror. Her daughter's manners was a subject very near her heart; good breeding and propriety of behaviour were very dear to her. Her bug-bear—her *bête noir*—was a hoyden. During the last few days, her anticipation of the appearance of a hoyden had been growing stronger and

stronger. A girl who had never known a home—a girl brought up at a school of which *she* had never heard—the associate of any vulgar girl whose parents had money enough to afford a good education—good manners, in such a case, she inwardly observed, she could scarcely expect to find: a hoyden was but too likely to present itself.

“I hope she is pretty, mamma,” Annette said, breaking a long listening silence. “I must say, I like people to be pretty.”

“So as her manners are good, I confess I think beauty of feature of little importance,” replied her mother.

“Except, mamma, that manners can be improved, but nothing can make an ugly face a pretty one.”

“Manners may be improved, certainly, but the improvement is usually superficial. Once a hoyden, more or less, the hoyden remains for life.”

“Here they come, mamma,” said Zoé, who, having stationed herself on the watch, now rushed into the room. “It is so dark, I can’t see anything. I only see that she is in *deep* black, and that she is sitting by papa.”

“And we could have told *you* as much as that, Zoé,” said Annette smiling. “Run back and meet papa. Shall I go? May I, mamma?” she asked, hesitatingly, longing to give a cordial welcome to the young and, probably, affrighted stranger, but always a submissive daughter to her mother’s rules of propriety.

“No, my love, sit still, the wind is very cold to-night, and I should prefer that you received her here.”

“Poor girl,” said Annette. “It must be a trying thing to come to a houseful of strangers.”

“It will soon be over,” said the wise mother.

The door opened with a burst, Zoé leading the way; Mr. Beauchamp followed, and his

young charge was behind him. "This is Miss Moore, Anne," he observed, as he received the greetings of his wife and daughter, "you must make her warm and comfortable;"—and then soliloquizing, "they will get on best by themselves," he returned to a refractory postboy; to renew an often repeated argument as to the number of miles between Beauchamp Park and the station.

Miss Moore stood at the door immoveable. Mrs. Beauchamp went towards her with a slight formal bow, and begged her to draw near to the fire. The bow was more formally returned, and the invitation was unnoticed.

With a half-glance of apology at her mother, Annette, unable to restrain a kinder welcome, went towards her with her hand stretched out, and a more earnest repetition of her mother's words on her lips. She, at the same time, endeavoured to draw the young stranger forward; but with a very resolved and self-possessed move-

ment, Miss Moore, after a few steps, seated herself on a sofa, at some distance from the cheéring warmth of the fire.

A bright lamp stood on the table near which she sat, and Annette and Mrs. Beauchamp were able to satisfy their curiosity regarding their guest. Mrs. Beauchamp, indeed, was already satisfied. Repelled she might be, but there was obviously nothing of the hoyden in the slight figure of the silent stranger. Annette also could not but be satisfied, as she gazed on the fair face before her. Sybil Moore was beautiful ; not, perhaps, with perfect beauty, but with many of its elements. Her hazel eyes were large, soft, and piercing ; her dark chestnut hair shone in the lamplight ; and her skin, even after the heat and cold of a journey, was as smooth as it was white and dazzling. There are many who depreciate the beauty of complexion ; because it is not of so high an order of beauty as beauty of

feature, they undervalue its charm; but a fine complexion is a lovely thing, and, if not of the highest order, is a beauty that gives great pleasure. Sybil Moore had it in perfection, and Annette, for a few moments, gazed at her with wondering admiration. She had hardly decided, however, that she never had seen so fair a face, when her opinion underwent some change. The small lips were closed with a cold and rigid air, and her haughty and womanly manner sat unpleasantly on her youthful appearance. She sighed, as she feared her new companion might prove hard and repulsive. But again a more favourable opinion was formed. Zoé had followed her father from the room, but at this point of the survey crept in again. Annette drew her, with a smile, to the silent guest, and Zoé frankly extended her hand. The cold lips parted, and an answering smile—as sweet as Annette could desire—for a moment lit up

her face into new beauty ; then vanished like lightning, and left her as chilly as before.

“It is a long journey, Miss Moore,” Mrs. Beauchamp began. “I fear you must be much fatigued.”

“Not at all, thank you,” was the short, stiff answer.

“The railway is less tiring than a close fly,” continued Mrs. Beauchamp, anxious to make some conversation. “Our roads here are hilly, and, I confess, I find the way from the station unpleasant and inconvenient.”

“I hate the railway,” said the young lady, decidedly ; “and the last part of the journey was by far the best.”

“Lord Singleton would be pleased to hear you say that,” said Annette, smiling ; “he does not like to have the roads abused—does he, mamma ?”

Sybil drew herself up with a look of supreme indifference, and the conversation dropped.

“We are charged with messages from Lord Singleton,” Mrs. Beauchamp observed, after a pause. “It was with extreme regret that he quitted the neighbourhood at this moment, but in a matter of sickness there is no choice. He begged us to express his regrets to you, and to make his apology.”

A slight inclination of her head was all the answer to this speech, and even Mrs. Beauchamp’s good breeding was at a loss for any further small talk.

Mr. Beauchamp, fortunately, now returned, and, seeing at a glance that they were not ‘getting on,’ he relieved the party by a quick observation. “Miss Moore will not allow she is tired, but, if she is not, she ought to be so ; therefore, Annette, the sooner you take her to rest before dinner the better.”

All received the proposal cordially. Miss Moore hastily rose, and the two young ladies left the room. They went up the stairs in

silence ; but when Annette threw open the door of Sybil's room, the comfort and prettiness of the room surprised the latter into kindly manners and kindly warmth.

“What a pretty room !” she exclaimed. “How comfortable you have made it. I am so much obliged to you.”

“I am glad you like it,” said Annette, eagerly. “It was new done by Lord Singleton, entirely to please you, and entirely by his own taste.”

Again Sybil's manners changed ; and, without a word, she crossed the room, threw off her bonnet, and sat down by the fire in sullen indifference. On removing her bonnet, she appeared to Annette prettier than before. Her head was small, and well placed on her neck and shoulders. Increasing admiration, and the effect of her few warm words, disposed Annette to like her, notwithstanding the repelling manners she had assumed ; and, being a

very simple, straightforward kind of person, she asked the plain question—"Do you like me to stay with you, or would you rather be alone?"

"I should like you to stay," said Sybil, graciously; and Annette took a seat by the fire, opposite to her.

Sybil leant her head on her hand, and though she had invited Annette to stay, made no effort to speak.

"Does anything displease you?" Annette asked, after watching her grave countenance for some moments.

"It does not please me to come amongst strangers," she replied, coldly. "It is not likely that it should."

"No, certainly; I thought you would feel that; but the strangeness will soon be over, and then I hope you will like us. Lord Singleton planned it all with a view to your happiness."

Sybil made no answer; but, after another pause, asked—"Have I seen all your family?"

"Yes; I have only that one little sister. We live a very quiet life here; but I hope you will not mind?"

"That depends. A quiet life need not be dull, but is often so. I should not like a dull life."

"I don't think it is dull," Annette replied, with some eagerness; "at least I never find it so. Lord Singleton is always doing something to make an interest."

Instead of replying, Sybil threw herself back in her chair with an expression of weariness.

Annette immediately rose, and said she would leave her to rest.

The young lady acquiesced, and Annette returned to the dining-room.

She found her father awaiting her. He wished to indulge in a little gossip over the

new comer. "Well, Annette, how do you like her?" he inquired.

Annette's reply was an expression of delighted admiration at her beauty.

"She is very pretty, certainly, and her manners are good, as mamma has just been saying."

"I said there was nothing of the hoyden about her," observed Mrs. Beauchamp. "Her manners are stiff, but that often proceeds from shyness. It is a good fault. I would rather see a young lady even over shy and silent, than hoydenish."

"I think Lord Singleton will be surprised," Annette said. "I am sure he expects something very different."

"Mamma must write to him to-morrow, and tell him she is a very well-behaved young lady. She is not very talkative, but her eyes are so bright, I am sure that is from no want of sense. I dare say we shall get on very well.

I confess I am not displeased to have a little beauty. I like a pretty face."

"I am glad her manners are good ; that is the chief thing," said Mrs. Beauchamp, "as far as outward appearance goes. It now remains to discover whether her mind is well informed, and her principles fixed."

CHAPTER VI.

“The ladies fair, the maidens free,
Were all accustom’d then to say,
Who would a handsome figure see
Should look upon Sir Eustace Grey.”
CRABBE.

THE two young ladies were left together the following morning, after breakfast.

Sybil walked to the window, and looked out. The view from the window was very pretty. It was but park scenery, but the park was finely wooded, and the ground was in some places rugged and broken. A part of the house was seen in the distance, with blue hills behind, and a sloping bank tufted with fine

trees before it. It was a fine day, and even in its winter garb, the view was attractive.

“I like this view,” Sybil said. “It is an advantage to look out on anything so pretty.”

“That is the house, Lord Singleton’s house,” said Annette. “It looks very well from here; the shades those trees throw on the bank at sunset are quite beautiful; I often watch them.”

“I don’t care whose house it is,” Sybil said carelessly, “I like the view; the hills, and the trees, and the fields. Shall I be in the way if I make a sketch of it?”

“Wait till the spring,” Annette said; “it does not do itself justice to-day. I should be sorry to see it in a dreary winter drawing.”

“I may not be here in the spring,” replied Sybil; “and I had better do it while I can. I always make a point of sketching every place I go to, be it pretty or not; the sketches stand in the place of a journal.”

“Shall you not be here in the spring?” Annette asked in some surprise. “I thought you were to live with us.”

“That depends,” was the decisive reply.

She left the room as she spoke, and presently returned with her drawing materials. Annette in the meanwhile had placed herself at her own employment. She also was drawing, but it was the stiff copy of a cottage plan, by feet and measurement, left with her by Lord Singleton.

Sybil silently seated herself, made her sketch with great rapidity, and worked in the first soft tints of colour. When this was done, she rose and looked over Annette’s shoulder.

“You are very busy, Miss Beauchamp,” she said. “May I see what you are about?”

Annette laid down her rulers, and pushed her copy towards her.

“It is beautifully done, but what is the use of it?”

“It is the plan of a new cottage, for Lord Singleton. The plan was lent him by somebody who could not spare it long.”

“And so he orders you to make a copy of it,” Sybil said, with a curl of her lip.

“Not orders,” Annette said, smiling; “he asks me to do it, and I am glad. I like to be useful.”

Sybil said no more. When she returned to her seat, Annette rose in her turn and looked at her companion’s employment. Her expressions of surprise and admiration were loud and warm. The drawing was good, the colouring managed with great taste, and the first tints gave the promise of more beauty than a finished sketch often fulfils.

Surprised and pleased with her pleasure, Sybil was about to answer, when she added, “Lord Singleton will be quite delighted, he has so often wished to have this very view.”

The words were naturally said, and were the

expression of a very natural feeling ; but perhaps as naturally they irritated, and gave offence. They had hardly left Annette's lips, before Sybil dashed her brush with a hasty movement into some thick grey colour, and spread it in a ferocious cloud on her clear sky. Annette, all unconscious of offence, exclaimed in dismay. By this time grown cooler, and perhaps satisfied with this vent for her ill-temper, Sybil sobered down the dark tint, and certainly in the end the effect of her irritation was to add considerably to the beauty of her sketch.

After watching her proceedings for some minutes, with eager pleasure, Annette at length said—

“You must not think, Miss Moore, that I mean to flatter, if I ask how, at sixteen, it is possible you can have learned to draw and paint like this. I am not clever myself, but I think I know what is good and pretty, and I am certain this sketch of yours would be called by great people ‘masterly.’ ”

“I am not sixteen,” replied Sybil. “I am seventeen to-day.”

“Are you, indeed !” Annette said, quickly and kindly ; “then I will wish you many, many happy returns of the day.”

“Thank you,” Sybil replied, with cold quietness, but as she stooped her head over her drawing, Annette saw a rising colour in her cheek, and a tremulous motion in her eyelids that seemed to say, happiness was not a certain hope to her desolate and orphan state.

She looked at her with deepening interest, though she forbore in this early stage of their acquaintance to intrude into her unexpressed feelings.

In the course of the morning the sketch was nearly completed, and it lost but little in its finishing. It was a happy effort of one who had learnt, in common with almost all, at this day, the art of water-colouring, and who had

taste and genius enough to give real character to her sketches.

Before it was quite finished, Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamp entered the room, and each separately, as they approached Sybil, exclaimed with admiration at her drawing, and added, as Annette had done—

“How delighted Lord Singleton will be!”

The exclamations came like the spontaneous language of their hearts—they were but natural,—yet still more than before, it must be owned, were irritating. At the first, Sybil dashed her brush aside and pushed her drawing from before her; at the second, impatience was no longer controllable, and rooting it from the block on which she had sketched, she tore it in pieces. Yet her heart yearned over it as her best and happiest effort; and even in the act of destruction, she contemplated it as sorrowfully as a penitent child some regretted work of mischief

“I am afraid,” said Mr. Beauchamp, recovering from his surprise, “that you dreaded Lord Singleton’s criticism; but I assure you there is no need. His appreciation of works of art is very just, but he has never had time to make himself a *connoisseur*.”

“I dread no criticism,” said Sybil, drawing herself up, penitent no longer; “the severer the better, so that it is just.”

“Why did you do it?” asked Annette, taking the remnants from her hands; “I would give many pounds, if I had them, to recover that sketch again.”

“You shall have another and a better one,” Sybil said, smiling, “and without any pounds.” And gathering her drawing materials together, and throwing the remnants, in passing, into the fire-place, she left the room.

“You must not let her be afraid of Lord Singleton, Annette,” said Mr. Beauchamp. “Tell her how good and kind he is.”

It was a subject on which Annette could be eloquent, and she promised to do, what would be well performed.

Her wonderment at the talents of her youthful guest did not diminish. Sybil had only learned the accomplishments which every child now learns, but she gave to them—to those at least which pleased her taste, such as drawing and music—a zest and heartiness of attention which made her performances singularly pleasing to others. Annette had learned all, and more than all, that Sybil had learned, but her heart and mind went in another direction. She played without taste and drew without spirit. Except as a means of pleasing her mother, the occupations were without charm to herself, and, consequently, she was without power to make them charming to others.

She had, however, as she said herself, the taste that appreciates, and with wonder, and

a most amiable kind of envy, she watched and listened to Sybil.

A few days after her arrival, she again expressed to Sybil her surprise in the acquirements she had, at so early an age, attained.

“How you depreciate youth,” Sybil said. “What should do things well, if youth does not?”

“I thought youth was the time to learn,” said Annette, smiling. “One does not expect perfection in youth.”

“Perfection! that is a great word; but even perfection I should better expect from youth than from age. There is a spirit in youth we never can hope to have again. Do you suppose that I, for instance, when the cares and troubles of the world have dulled me, shall care to play and to draw as I do now? These things interest me now, but their zest will pass by when life begins.”

“You argue it out very well,” said Annette,

“but you cannot change my feeling of wonder at all you have done in your short life ; and it is not my opinion only. Papa said yesterday—no,” she added, stopping and laughing, “I must not tell you what he said, as it would make you vain ; but it meant the same that I say—wonder that you, in your youth, should have accomplished more than most people gain with years of practice and trouble.”

“You will not make me vain by compliments gathered from my youth,” was Sybil’s reply. “I say again, there is a spirit in youth that nothing can baffle. What advantage has age, to compare to the freshness there is in youth?”

“Years, I suppose,” said Annette. I mean just that which youth cannot have—the year which have given it wisdom and experience.”

“And what have years ever done equal to what the want of years has done. I express myself ill, but I mean what I say. As I lay

in bed at night, I sometimes think of what youth has done till my blood boils. Think only of that young Napoleon. He was nothing in his age compared to what he was in his youth. And I," she added, unconsciously gathering herself up, and her hazel eyes flashing with brightness—"I, without pretending to genius or any other uncommon thing, feel that I, in my youth, can do whatever life requires of me; and more, far more, than I shall do when the dullness of wisdom comes over me."

"I think, indeed, you could do anything you pleased," said Annette, smiling; "and one thing I must tell you you have done—you have made a convert of me. I am all for youth now, and wish I was younger, that I might feel the spirit you feel. Certainly," she added, thoughtfully, "what you say has great truth. Without arguing upon it, as you do, I have often felt the same with regard to

Lord Singleton. When poor Lord Singleton, his father, died, everyone spoke of the loss of his advice and great experience; but his son, *our* Lord Singleton, does more and influences more, far, far more, than his father ever did. The spirit that animates him seems as if it could never droop or die. It drives him on, and all who come near him."

Sbiyl made no comments on this application of her theory, but after a short silence said, in a slightly sarcastic tone, "May I ask you one question, Miss Beauchamp?"

"One or many," replied Annette.

"Is Lord Singleton perfect?"

Annette coloured, but answered without hesitation, and even with readiness, "I don't know what you expect me to say, but I will say what I think, without fear of your laughing at me. Imperfect, of course, we all are, I suppose, properly speaking; and, therefore, Lord Singleton is imperfect; but if you ask me

in what he is not perfect, I cannot answer you. If I were to search for faults I could not find them."

"That is decisive," Sybil replied in the same manner. "But may I ask further, Miss Beauchamp, what you call perfection? We all have different ideas of the word, and your definition may only include freedom from open vice."

"To have no thought but to do good in the world," said Annette with warmth, "no thought of self, no thought but for others. Where there is this spirit, even when I see faults, I forgive them. When I see none then I call it perfection."

Sybil made no answer, and each young lady proceeded with her employment. Little Zoé, who was at work in a window, was the next to speak.

"Annette, if you don't mind my saying it, I think Lord Singleton has one fault."

Both looked up smiling, and Annette said "No, Zoé I don't mind. Mamma does not like you to find faults, but I dare say you mean nothing unkind now."

"I never mean anything unkind," said the little girl, "but I can't help making remarks, whether I say them out or not, and I think, sometimes, Lord Singleton speaks a little too loud."

"Oh! well, perhaps, Zoé, but that is hardly a fault; and, if that is all, I think I may still call him perfect."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Beauchamp," said Sybil. "I don't mean in this particular case," she observed, haughtily; "it has been decided that Lord Singleton is perfect; but speaking generally, manner is only the outward sign of inward dispositions, and if there is anything wrong or disagreeable in the manner, you may be sure there is something more wrong within."

“How wise you are,” said Annette smiling, “you speak like a judge of sixty.”

“It does not want years to make observations, it only wants opportunity, and that I have had.”

“But only in one place, and among one class of people, have you? and that is not enough to make decisions as you do.”

“If you think I have only been at school, Miss Beauchamp,” said Sybil quickly, “you are much mistaken. I have many friends, and in visiting my friends I have seen most parts of England, and all classes of people.”

“Then I fear, indeed,” said Annette thoughtfully, “that you will find us dull. I hoped this was your first, or nearly first, visit. Are your friends all as clever as—” she smiled and stopped, and asked “are they all clever people?”

“If they were, my world would be different to any other world. No. If this were my first

visit I might find it dull, for life is not like life's dreams, but I have seen enough to have learned that truth, and, therefore, look for no impossible things."

CHAPTER VII.

“The wise and active, conquer difficulties
By daring to attempt them. Sloth and folly
Shiver and shrink at sight of toil and hazard,
And make the impossibility they fear.”

ROWE.

AFTER ten days' absence, the following letter was received from Lord Singleton :—

“Champs Elysées,

“Dec. 12.

“MY DEAR MRS. BEAUCHAMP,—

“I am become so great a French scholar, that I can hardly condescend to write plain

English. I have been talking French day and night ever since I came. I suppose you saw that my poor old uncle died on the 5th. It was sudden—not unexpected. Poor old fellow, I am glad I came, for he was pleased. I have been busy with some business of his ever since, and could not find time to write. I write to-day, merely to tell some good news. My uncle's will was opened to-day, and I find he has left me £8,000—the very sum I want. I had no idea he was so rich, and certainly had no claim to have anything. Now for the long-desired church and endowment at Rotherham. Tell Horner the good news, and tell him to look me, out of his big books, the plan of a good, plain, useful church. About five hundred sittings—no sham, no ornaments, short, thick tower, and lancet windows. If he finds a proper one, one, beg Annette to make a copy, and I will send it to London, and get an estimate at

once. Give my compliments to everybody. Thank you for your letter; for, as you are a woman of your word, I know there is one somewhere, but I have never seen it. Hurrah! for the Church. I shall soon be home.

“Yours, affectionately,

“SINGLETON.”

Mrs. Beauchamp gave the letter, with a smile, to her husband; he passed it on to Annette; and, with a glance of inquiry to her mother, Annette laid it before Sybil.

Though scarcely more than a week had elapsed since she became an inmate of the house, she had assimilated herself so pleasantly to their ways, that she was no longer a stranger to them. It is true, they stood a little in awe of their guest, listening to the opinions of her very youthful years with a deference which spoke more forcibly than Sybil's words could do, of the non-importance of age; but this awe added to the interest she

inspired ; and while both Mr. Beauchamp and Annette had completely lost their hearts to her, even Mrs. Beauchamp had been surprized into a cordiality she never gave to new acquaintance, and rarely to old. She answered Annette's look of inquiry with a ready acquiescence, and Sybil was made a partaker in the interest Lord Singleton's letter created.

It was offered by Annette in the affectionate desire to exhibit the generous and disinterested spirit that possessed him ; but when Sybil had perused the epistle, she laid it down, with the dry and sarcastic inquiry—

“Is Lord Singleton mad?”

Annette coloured. Mr. Beauchamp said, smiling—

“No—no, Miss Moore, not mad, only enthusiastic. He writes to us who understand him.”

“Enthusiasm is often only another name for madness,” observed Sybil.

“If it is,” Annette cried, with eager and somewhat indignant warmth, “then I wish all the world was mad. The only people I can ever care to see are such mad people!”

“I believe I agree with you,” Sybil said, heartily. “Let enthusiasm be as mad as it will, there is a spirit in it that warms one in this cold world.”

“Within due bounds, and regulated with prudence, enthusiasm is no doubt useful,” said Mrs. Beauchamp.

“No doubt it is,” said her husband. “I am all on Annette’s side. I wish we could stir it up in Horner’s sluggish soul. If anything will inspire him, it will be the thoughts of this church. Annette shall tell him. Get your bonnet, my love, and we will go down and rouse him with the news. Put on a warm cloak, for there was a hard frost last night. Will you come with us, Miss Moore? If it is not too early, we shall like your

company, and Lord Singleton will, I am certain, be glad to have the benefit of your taste."

"Thank you," said Sybil, coldly; "but I have no taste in such matters."

Nevertheless, when Annette returned with a chosen plan, she did condescend to show a certain taste by criticizing it most unmercifully. The criticism was not just. Lord Singleton's directions left much room for simple beauty, and both Annette and Mr. Horner had very correct taste and judgment. It pleased Sybil, however, to condemn with utter condemnation, and to cast contempt upon it by glowing descriptions of beauties which could not be attained. Confident that the plan was a pretty one, and one likely to be pleasing to Lord Singleton, Annette, unmoved by Sybil's animadversions, set to work on her copy. But not so Mr. Horner. He was much excited, and came several times

to the Cottage to talk the subject over, but ever guided by any strong opinion or guiding mind, he shortly lost his interest in the simple plan proposed, and began to dream of cloistered arches, mosaic pavements, and richly-designed windows. Pleased with her convert, Sybil talked on, and criticized with unsparing freedom; nor were Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamp perfectly indifferent to her condemnations. They began to fear the eyes of the world might accuse Lord Singleton of niggardliness. Such is the singular influence of criticisms boldly expressed, be they just or not.

“Lord Singleton arrived last night. Have you heard that, Annette?” said Mr. Beauchamp, on entering the breakfast-room four or five days after the receipt of Lord Singleton’s letter.

“How glad I am!” she exclaimed; and the

exclamation was not needed to express what her sparkling eyes proclaimed.

Sybil drew herself up into stateliness, though her heightened colour showed some interest in the announcement.

“At what hour did he arrive?” asked Mrs. Beauchamp.

“He came late, they say, but he is already up and about. James Gregory took up a note from Mr. Horner, early this morning, and found him in the stables. He told him to come on here, and tell me he was arrived. We shall see him shortly, no doubt.”

“Among his other perfections, does Lord Singleton do without sleep?” Sybil asked, in a dry voice.

“He sleeps but little, certainly,” replied Mr. Beauchamp; “too little, I think, for body and mind. There is a look in his eyes that sometimes alarms me; they seem to ask for rest, and they do not have it.”

“Oh! papa, do you think so,” cried Annette; “his eyes look to me as if they needed no sleep, so bright, so eager, and full life.”

“Too bright and eager, Annette; that is precisely what I mean. I sometimes long to close them, and force them to take their natural rest.”

“Mad, perhaps,” said Sybil, in the same mildly sarcastic way.

“No, no, Miss Moore, I have no fears for Lord Singleton’s mind. With all his enthusiasm, he is the essence of good sense. The danger I fear is simply to his eyes, a bodily, not a mental disease. How curious you must be to see him,” he added suddenly, turning his gaze full upon her.

“I! no, indeed,” replied Sybil, taken by surprise, and colouring with indignation.

“I think you must,” said Annette, smiling, “at least, I am sure I should if I had

heard as much about any one, as you have about Lord Singleton."

"When I have seen Lord Singleton," said Sybil, with lofty coldness, "I shall be able to judge whether he is worth curiosity."

"Whatever may be your impression regarding Lord Singleton, Miss Moore," observed Mr. Beauchamp, a good-humoured naturalness taking from the *fade* character of the compliment, "I think he will be disposed to think *you* worth curiosity."

Sybil vouchsafed no sign of gratification, and the conversation dropped.

Lord Singleton's appearance was expected the whole morning, but he did not come. At half-past twelve Mr. Beauchamp came into the dining-room, and said he should walk up to the Park. "Something must have happened to prevent his coming to us," Mr. Beauchamp added, "and possibly he may want my assistance. It must be some real business, Miss

Moore," looking at Sybil, "or I am sure he would have hastened to make your acquaintance before now."

"No apology is due to me," said Sybil, calmly, "I can perfectly wait his leisure."

Nevertheless, if her secret heart could have been searched, some pique at his delay, short as it was, might have been discovered, and this did not add kindness to the feelings with which she regarded him.

Mr. Beauchamp left the room, and was soon perceived by his wife, crossing the park towards the house. He had not been ten minutes out of sight, before the clatter of a horse's hurried gallop was heard at the front door, and a moment afterwards, Lord Singleton entered the drawing-room.

He gave a quick tap at the door, putting his head in with "May I come in?" at the same moment. Annette rose with smiling eyes, and Mrs. Beauchamp with real pleasure ;

but Sybil sat immoveable, bending—as if totally without interest or concern in his appearance—over her drawing.

“How do you all do?” he said, cordially shaking hands with each. “I am glad to see you again; though I am in such a hurry to-day, I have hardly time to say so. Is that Miss Moore?”

Mrs. Beauchamp turned to Sybil to introduce her, but, with the same cordial manner, Lord Singleton went to her and held out his hand, saying—“Though this is our first meeting, Miss Moore, your name is so familiar to me, that I cannot feel we are strangers.”

Sybil rose, and could not refuse to take the hand he held out; but, having done so, withdrew hers instantly with haughty coldness, and reseated herself.

Her manner was entirely lost upon him. Having done his duty, he thought of her and looked at her no more, but turned eagerly to

Annette—"I am sorry my visit must be so short, Annette, as I have a thousand things to say ; but there's a row, and I must be off to see about it."

"A *row!*" exclaimed Mrs. Beauchamp, in involuntary alarm, for nothing but surprise could have drawn such a word from her lips.

"Has not Horner told you his troubles? No, I dare say not ; for he said nothing to me, and a word at the beginning would have saved it all. He is such a coward—so afraid of rows that he never is out of them. It is at the school on the heath. The boys will not have prayers read. When Horner or the master tries to read, they kick up a row. This has been going on for three weeks, and Horner was so afraid of their threats of leaving the school if he persisted, that he has given way—actually given way to a parcel of ragged rascals who know no better. But he guessed what

my mind would be, and wrote me a note this morning, to tell me what had occurred. I believe he was too great a coward even to come and tell me himself, but I have been down to give him a piece of my mind; and now I am off to the heath to settle the matter at once."

"What shall you do?" asked Annette.

"Do!" he exclaimed, raising his voice in his excitement; "why, I shall just tell them to obey my orders, or to be off at once. What do I care for educating a school of rebellious heathens, that is not what I call education. They must obey my orders and learn their duty, or I will leave them to educate themselves. Poor fools! there will be no difficulty, if one is firm with them. Horner is a most estimable man, but he is a milksop—there is no denying it. I wish I could find an ogress wife to spirit him up a little. Now, good morning to you all, for I have no time to

lose. Good bye!" — and courteously — yet without special notice—bowing his head to Sybil and Mrs. Beauchamp, and nodding to Annette and Zoé, he departed.

A silence followed his departure. Annette longed to know what Sybil thought, but did not like to ask. It was not in Mrs. Beauchamp's idea of propriety to suppose young ladies to have opinions on such subjects at all—not that she did not suppose they had, but she did not choose *them* to suppose that *she* supposed they had. It was Zoé whose curiosity was restrained by no bonds.

"How do you like Lord Thingleton, Miss Moore?" she inquired, lisping, as was her habit.

"I think your opinion was a very just one, Zoé," she replied, sarcastically.

Annette blushed with disappointment and displeasure. To her eyes his bright kind face had been as sunshine. She could see no fault

or blemish in him, and had hardly conceived a state of mind to which he would present another appearance. She made no comment, however, or defence, but continued to work in silence.

“What was Zoé’s observation?” inquired Mrs. Beauchamp, gravely.

“Indeed, mamma,” exclaimed the little girl, blushing almost to tears at being thus brought forward, “I meant no harm. I only said, sometimes I thought he spoke too loud.”

“Little girls have enough to do with their own defects, without criticizing their elders and betters,” said Mrs. Beauchamp, severely.

“Oh! Mrs. Beauchamp, don’t be angry with Zoé,” cried Sybil, with earnestness. “We were speaking, one day, of faults and perfections, and Zoé happened to mention this peculiarity of Lord Singletons’s. I ought to have remembered that what is said hastily should not be repeated seriously. I beg your pardon,

Zoé," she continued, rising up, and putting arm caressingly round the little girl, in a warm winning way she often had—"you have good right to be angry with me."

"Don't spoil Zoé, Miss Moore," said Mrs. Beauchamp—but she spoke with kindness, not displeasure.

In the afternoon Annette walked with her father to Barnsley. Mr. Beauchamp had missed Lord Singleton in the morning, but hoped to meet him at the school on his return from the heath. A reading-room for the work-people was going to be opened at the beginning of the new year, and a box of books had to be unpacked, and a catalogue made. Mr. Beauchamp was above no kind of work, and he and Annette unpacked, and wrote, for an hour before Lord Singleton came. When he arrived at last, it was at full gallop, and in the same mad haste in which he had been in the morning; for the unexpected business that

had occupied him had thrown all his own business into arrear. He looked hastily over the books, begged Annette to be so good as to make the catalogue without him ; said he was very sorry to leave them, but he must. The masons were waiting for orders about the alteration in the stables, and a whole day had been lost.

“ But what have you done ? ” asked Annette, eagerly. “ Is all quiet ? ”

“ All right,” he said ; “ I would stay and tell you about it, if I could ; but, knowing I should not have time, I sent Horner with the news to the Cottage. You will find him there. Good-bye.”

“ Lord Singleton ! ” Annette called, pursuing him to the door, with a girl’s curiosity ; “ do stay one moment. What did you think of Miss Moore ? ”

“ I really had not time to think about her.”

“ Is she not beautiful ? You must have had time to see that.”

“Indeed, I had not. Is she very beautiful? What is she—dark or fair?”

“Oh! Lord Singleton,” said Annette, laughing.

“Indeed, my dear Annette, I did not see. I had only one vision before my eyes, and that was poor Horner baffled by the boys—not a lovely one. What is Miss Moore—dark or fair?”

“Very dark, but with a beautiful white skin. She is so pretty; we were so surprised when we first saw her.”

“Yes; I did not at all expect a beauty. Is she a good girl? I hope you like her?”

“Very much,” said Annette, warmly; “she is odd—that is not common—but very nice: we all like her.”

“I am glad of that. By-the-bye, I must have some conversation with her about her affairs, and I had better do it at once. Mr. Beauchamp! will you tell Miss Moore that I

should like to see her alone for a few minutes to-morrow morning? Let me see—about eleven, if that is not too early; make a civil message from me; and now let me go. Good-night, Annette. I have a great deal to say when I have time; and to you, Mr. Beauchamp. Perhaps *you* could come up to me in half an hour or so.”

Mr. Beauchamp replied in the affirmative, and Annette returned home alone. She looked in at the drawing-room window before she entered, and saw, by the bright fire-light—for it was now dark—Sybil and Mr. Horner: the latter was eagerly speaking, and the former was listening with an interest which made her beautiful face sparkle with animation.

“I am so glad you are still here,” said Annette to Mr. Horner, on her entrance. “I was afraid I might have missed you.”

“I should have waited, Miss Beauchamp, knowing your interest in our concerns. I

found Miss Moore alone, but she was good enough to beg me to remain, and has been listening with very kind attention to all I have had to say."

"I like to hear of any victory, let it come from whence it may," said Sybil, as if in apology for her evident interest in what he had related.

"You admire firmness, Miss Moore," observed Mr. Horner; "so do I; but I am sadly deficient in the quality I admire, which, undoubtedly, you are not."

"If that is true, Mr. Horner, why do you not acquire it? All things can be gained by those who wish for them."

"Can they? I doubt it. I doubt if firmness can be gained. I know for myself"—and he passed his fingers through his thin hair—"that it is not in my power to be firm. I am swayed by arguments, and guided by the opinions of others, even of those whom I do

not admire. What would be your receipt, Miss Moore, for acquiring firmness of character?"

"Form your opinions, and then hold them fast, let them be opposed ever so violently."

"A good receipt for obstinacy, not firmness," said Annette. "A firm man is never afraid of giving way, if there is a reason for it."

"A firm man may give way," said Sybil; "but that is not the question. Mr. Horner wishes to learn how to be firm, and the first thing is, to determine not to be swayed when once your mind is made up."

"If it is made up well and justly," said Annette, "not otherwise. But, Mr. Horner, do tell me about to-day. What did Lord Singleton do?"

"He behaved like himself, Miss Beauchamp, with the firmness and good sense that characterises him. We went together into the school, and he walked up to the desk, and

desired all the boys to stand. They obeyed at once. He then said, that if he wished to act only with justice, he should instantly desire them to leave the school, and return no more; but, as he hoped ignorance was the cause of their wicked and disorderly behaviour, he should explain his reasons to them for the duties he desired them to perform. And he did so in a few most admirable words; telling them that, for himself, he knew he could not do his duty without God's assistance, nor more could they, nor any man; and, therefore, instead of teaching them mere book-learning, like heathens, he meant to teach them, like Christian men, what was right, and how to do right. Therefore, he said nothing should move him, but prayers should be offered daily in his school, if there was but one boy left to hear them. He compelled no one to come; if they did not choose to learn, he was sorry; but it would be their

loss, not his, and so they would find. Having explained himself, he then desired that any boy who did not choose to submit, should leave the school at once. There was a dead silence. He repeated his order, adding, that he must tell them, that any boy making a noise at prayers, after this notice, should receive a sound thrashing, and be expelled on the spot. Again there was a dead silence. He then said, kindly, that he saw they all meant to be good friends for the future, and that he should think no more of what was past. He then left the school, and they all ran after him, and cheered him as he rode away with all their hearts. There will be no more trouble, I believe."

"I should think not," said Annette, with warmth. "They could not have withstood him."

"A firm will is never withstood," observed Sybil.

“It gives me encouragement, Miss Moore,” said Mr. Horner, “to find that you think firmness is a quality that can be acquired. I have been too much in the habit of considering it a gift from Heaven, which no man can attain for himself.”

“And so it is, I think,” said Annette; “and the only thing that is like it, is strong principle which determines to do *right* always. I am against learning obstinacy; it makes people very disagreeable.”

“I like people to have and hold their own opinions, whether it is obstinacy or not,” observed Sybil; and Mr. Horner gave his full concurrence to the sentiment.

The following morning, punctual to his time, Lord Singleton arrived. Sybil was not in the drawing-room, but Mrs. Beauchamp and Annette, as they took their works, and left the room, said they would go in search of her.

“I am extremely sorry to disturb you,” observed Lord Singleton, with his usual civility. “It need never occur again; I trust not, at least—not unless my ward should be so troublesome as to need my private animadversions.”

“And that is not very likely,” said Annette, laughing, as she followed her mother.

Sybil had purposely absented herself, but, being summoned, proceeded with a dignified air to the interview. Her dignity was, as on a former occasion, lost on Lord Singleton. He shook hands with her with kindness, placed a chair for her at a table, and, drawing some papers from his pocket, took his seat beside her.

“I will not detain you many minutes, Miss Moore,” he began; “but, in matters of business, I like to be precise, and to have everything clear and defined. It saves a world of trouble and misunderstanding afterwards. You

are aware, I suppose, that, on coming of age, you will be in possession of a small fortune."

"Yes," replied Sybil, "Mrs. Hurlstone told me so three months ago ; otherwise, I intended to be a governess as soon as I was eighteen."

"Indeed !" said Lord Singleton, somewhat startled at the decisive announcement ; "that was rather premature. You are also aware, then, I suppose, that the money saved for you by your father was lost in the failure of —— Bank, two years ago?"

"Yes ; my father told me of that when the failure took place. He did not tell me of my better fortune. I cannot tell why."

"I can guess," said Lord Singleton, smiling. "He did not wish the circumstance to be known until you were under his protection, or the protection of some other guardian."

"My father's protection," said Sybil, with emotion, "of course, I needed—all do—but since that has been taken from me, I hope I

shall be able, in all circumstances, to protect myself."

"I hope so, too," said Lord Singleton, kindly; "but, should it be otherwise, I hope you will remember that there is a protector, under whom your father has placed you, ready at your call."

Sybil's proud lip swelled, but she said nothing.

"I have arranged with Mr. Beauchamp," Lord Singleton resumed, after a moment, "that he should accept a certain sum, taken from the accumulation of your fortune, for receiving you into his house. He was not desirous to do this, but independence is pleasant, and I thought you would prefer it."

Sybil inclined her head with much graciousness, but inquired—"I thought my fortune could not be touched until I was one-and-twenty?"

"That is true, but I have made arrange-

ments." Meeting her inquiring eyes—eyes that seemed to say she would know all she chose to know—he continued—"I did not think it necessary to trouble you with details, but you shall hear them, if you please. You have a few hundreds from your father; when these are exhausted, I will advance such a sum as is absolutely necessary for your present comfort; and when you come of age, you shall pay me, if you choose. Do you see any objection to this?"

Sybil pondered with her eyes on the table for some moments. "I suppose, as I am under age, it would be useless for me to give any bond for repayment," at last she asked.

"Totally useless, I should suppose," he said; "but I am no lawyer."

"Then, what would happen to my debt, in the event of my death before I was twenty-one?"

“My dear Miss Moore,” exclaimed Lord Singleton, with some impatience, “allow me to say that a young lady can know nothing of legal points. I am your trustee, and I must and will act as seems to me best in these matters. Depend upon it, all shall be just and right. Let us leave that part of the subject. My next question is as to the sum you would wish to have for your private expenses. Do not answer me in haste, but think over the matter, and let me know.”

“Miss Beauchamp has £50 a year; I think I ought to do with the same,” was Sybil’s instant reply.

“That is exactly the sum I should have proposed,” said Lord Singleton, with pleasure. “I am glad our opinions are the same. I was afraid that you would think it too little; but though, with your prospects, I think you ought to live with perfect comfort, still I recommend economy: there is no folly so

great as squandering a fortune before we get it."

"So I think," she said, decisively; "and be my allowance little or great, I will make it do."

Pleased with the good sense of his ward, Lord Singleton now got up and said he would trouble her no longer. "I have only to say further," he observed, as he held out his hand, "that I hope you are comfortable here, and that you are now satisfied I made a good choice in fixing the place of your abode?"

"At present I am satisfied," she replied, with strong emphasis. "If I should not be so in future, I shall certainly not remain."

"We will see about that when the time comes," said her young guardian, good-humouredly, and left her without noticing or even perceiving the wrath flashing from her eye.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ He is gracious, if he be observed.
He hath a tear for pity, and a hand
Open as day for melting charity :
Yet notwithstanding being incens’d he’s flint—
As humorous as winter, and as sudden
As flaws congealed in the spring of day.”

KING HENRY IV.

BETWEEN some characters having no similarity to each other, there is a natural sympathy ; though very diverse it may be in most points, disposition fits disposition, habits fit habits, and mind understands mind. Between others remarkably similar, there exists, on the contrary, a natural antagonism ; though, in fact, their

dispositions do fit, and their minds are capable of understanding each other, there is a perpetual jar. This must, of course, be peculiarly the case where two strong wills, and marked characters, meet. Until one or the other, either from a greater degree of amiableness or some slighter degree of strength, succumbs, there must be strife.

Any indifferent, yet observant mind, would have foreseen, and watched with amusement, the strife that must inevitably ensue between Lord Singleton and his ward;—that it was not observed, was because his own mind, and the minds of all about him, were so pre-occupied with the conviction of his right to reign, that rebellion was an idea that could not enter the imagination.

Which was the strongest of the two could not be surmised without trial; but in addition to natural force of will, the wilfulness of both the guardian and the ward was strengthened

by other considerations. Lord Singleton, by a sense of his duty as a guardian, and Sybil, from a resolute determination that her young guardian should not rule over her. His domineering conduct regarding her place of abode had excited the first flame of rebellion in one, who, from natural disposition, from independence of early control, and from the kind, but ill-judged court, that had been paid, where-soever she went, to her talents and beauty, had formed no lowly estimate of her rights and powers; to this the sight of the submission paid to him in his dominions, had added a perverse and most childish determination to be the one to oppose the tyranny of his rule.

The first difference between them was merely a difference of opinion. It was on the subject of the new church.

A few days after his return, Lord Singleton came to the Cottage to talk over the proposed plan. Annette only was at home, and she and

Lord Singleton perfectly agreeing in all points, settled the whole matter between them. Lord Singleton put the plan she had drawn out into his pocket, and proceeded next to Mr. Horner, to talk it over with him. He expected acquiescence and delight; but, to his astonishment, was met by opposition and discontent. Point after point was criticized, and suggestion after suggestion thrown out, till the humble church seemed about to swell into a cathedral. With good-humoured patience, Lord Singleton answered some of the objections till, as they multiplied, he could not refrain from saying impatiently, that "If this was the way in which Mr. Horner took it, there had better be no church at all."

"By no means," was Mr. Horner's reply, "all I should propose, is, that the sum destined for the building be put aside to accumulate, until a more respectable edifice can be

erected. Let all things be done decently and in order."

A perfect thunder came down on the head of the unfortunate man, at this expression of opinion, and overwhelmed by the force of arguments, very soundly, and very imperiously enforced, Mr. Horner lost sight of Sybil's receipt, to hold his own opinion, and giving it up in haste, excused himself by sheltering it under Miss Moore's authority.

It was late when Lord Singleton left Mr. Horner, but at all times disconcerted at opposition, especially on a subject so near his heart, and still more discontented that the opposition should have come from his ward, he turned his restless steps to the Cottage.

The Cottage drawing-room was the scene of repose and comfort. By the fire Mr. Beauchamp slept. On each side of the table, on which the lamp stood, Annette and Mrs. Beauchamp worked, the former, coarse work

for the poor, the latter, something more refined and complicated, which, by her example, she endeavoured to prevail on her daughter to approve. In a corner of the room, was a small round table, with a table-cloth upon it, and there sat Zoé, at her tea, and Sybil keeping her company.

Lord Singleton tapped, and looked in. "Don't wake Mr. Beauchamp," he said, "my business is not with him;" and instead of advancing into the room, he pulled a chair, and placed himself at Zoé's little table.

"Now Zoé, my good child," he said, "make me some tea, very hot and very strong. My visit is to you, Miss Moore, can you guess why?"

A quiet negative was all Sybil's reply.

"I went down to talk to Horner about the church, this afternoon, and I find him all astray, full of whims and crotchets, when I had hoped to find him full of rapture, and all these

crotchets he shelters under your authority. In short, I find, Miss Moore, that you disapprove of my plan entirely."

"Mr. Horner has no right to speak of my private opinions," said Sybil, with indignant haughtiness.

"No right, perhaps, but the poor man has no opinions of his own, you know, so when I broke his head with arguments, he was obliged to fly for shelter somewhere. I was sorry to find that you had been prompting him."

"My own opinions I have," said Sybil, coldly. "If, when I expressed them, Mr. Horner was convinced, it is no fault of mine; I neither prompted, nor desired to prompt him."

"Never mind Horner," said Lord Singleton, "we will leave him alone. Let us come to the case in point. You object to my proposed church, is it not so?"

"Object!" said Sybil, angry at being sup-

posed even to take an interest in Lord Singleton's concerns. "I have no business to object : I have no concern in the matter. Speaking generally, I may have given an opinion, but that is all."

"Certainly," he replied ; "I never supposed you wished to oppose me, but speaking generally, you object to such a plan. May I ask why ?"

"I hate anything poor and mean," Sybil said, with warmth.

"So do I, with all my heart, but I don't call simple things poor and mean ; what I call mean is anything that is sham. All shall be thoroughly good in my church, but simple it must be, for no man can do more than he can do. Is it not better to give the poor things a poor church, than to leave them without one ?"

"I doubt it," said Sybil, eager against her will ; "in such things the *best* should always

be given. If they see you give what is poor, they will think but little of it."

"I don't call simple poor," cried Lord Singleton, with some heat. "For my part, I infinitely prefer a simple country church to all the grand decorations in the world. But if I did like them, I could not give them in this case. It would be millions of years before what I have got would accumulate into a sum sufficient to build Westminster Abbey."

"I suppose all would be glad to have Westminster Abbey, if they could, but there is no need to run into extremes."

"Just be so good, Miss Moore, as to show me on a piece of paper the kind of thing you mean. Annette, bring us a pencil and a bit of paper, if you please."

It was a difficult request to comply with, nevertheless Sybil made no opposition to it. Annette stood over her as she quickly sketched the outward form of some church that had

taken her fancy, with decorations many and various—beautiful, but highly wrought. When it was done she placed it before him.

“I like Miss Moore’s plan better than yours,” lisped Zoé.

“Do you,” he said, pinching her cheek with some vexation. “I don’t; and if I did I could not build this under ten thousand at least. No—no, Miss Moore I am extremely obliged to you for your advice, but I cannot take it. I could not if I would, and I——”

He paused, checked himself, and smiled.

“I offered no advice,” Sybil said, coldly; “and certainly have no wish that my opinion should influence in a matter where I have no interest.”

“But I must beg you to feel interest,” he said, rising; “I shall not be content till you approve my plan. She will when it is done, won’t she, Annette. Is there any other dissentient voice?”

Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamp said, when it came to a question of delay, they could not have a doubt in the matter; and, as Sybil said no more, Lord Singleton went away tolerably content; but that small opposition irritated him in a way that could hardly be conceived, except by those who have been accustomed to rule unquestioned. He tossed his books about during the evening, seeking for arguments in favour of simple churches, and perfectly unconscious the while of the cause of his restless state of mind.

This argument was not renewed, and all things flowed easily along for a few weeks. Lord Singleton and his ward became accustomed to see each other, but formed no intimate acquaintance. He behaved to her with kindness and civility, but showed no desire to cultivate her. Annette remained his friend and confidante, and though he spoke freely before Sybil, he rarely sought to hear her opinions, or engage her peculiar interest.

“Do you not admire Miss Moore,” Annette said to him one day.

“Yes, very much,” he replied, cordially. “Her eyes are beautiful, and I like the way she moves her head about.”

“Then why do you not talk to her more?”

“My dear Annette what has that to do with the matter. When I am talking to you or Mrs. Beauchamp, I sometimes look at her, because she is there, but that is all. I have nothing to say to her. I never was made for a lady’s man.”

“But she is not a common girl. She has very good opinions on most subjects. You would like to talk to her if you tried.”

“Should I, then I am sure I shall not try. I want no fresh business on my hands.”

“Business,” said Annette laughing.

“Yes, business. If I got into a habit of gossiping with girls, there would be an end of my work. I keep my eye upon her to see

that all goes right and then I think my duty is done."

It was some weeks before Lord Singleton thought himself called upon to interfere in Miss Moore's habits and mode of life. Not that he entirely approved of them. To Annette he more than once expressed himself on the subject.

"She does no one useful thing from morning till night," was his observation in talking of her, one day.

"She has to learn first to make herself useful," was Annette's reply. "She is only seventeen."

"But when she has learned all this music and drawing that takes up her time, of what use will it be?"

"Oh! Lord Singleton," cried Annette, "do you mean to make the world so hard and dry, that you would banish all beauty from it. I thought you liked music. I am sure you

seemed to like Miss Moore's playing and singing, the other night, when you dined with us."

"So I did. I like good music always, and hers is very good. It is all right for a pleasure, but I say she spends her life in these things and does nothing useful. Now, my idea of a woman, and a man too for that matter, is, that they are sent into the world to make themselves useful. I think a life that is no use to anybody, is a very sad and foolish thing."

"I am sure I think so too," said Annette warmly, "but some people are not so happy as to find useful things ready and waiting for them to do. They will come, in time to Sybil, and so will her will to do them. Meanwhile, she is really useful to Zoé. She is teaching her many things."

Lord Singleton gave two or three discontented nods with his head but said no more at the time, and did not think himself justified,

in spite of his paternal authority over her, in interfering with the way in which she passed her time. This did not apply, however, to a case which he looked on as a positive dereliction of duty. In such a case he thought himself absolutely called upon to interfere. This was in consequence of Miss Moore's absenting herself always, and apparently by rule, from the afternoon service on Sundays. Supposing the omission, at first, to be accidental, and afterwards hoping that the example of others would influence her, he allowed eight or nine weeks to pass without an admonition; but at length, no change of habit taking place, he thought the time was come for an exercise of his authority.

“I must trouble you, Mrs. Beauchamp,” he said to her, one day, “with a message to Miss Moore. Why does she not come to church in the afternoon? Have you not invited her to come?”

“Yes, indeed, often, but she replied to me, when I once remonstrated with her on the subject, that it was not her habit to attend divine service twice in the day.”

“Habit! Mrs. Beauchamp, what is habit? that is a very poor answer to make. We, all of us, have bad habits enough, everyone knows. Our hope is to get rid of them, not to cherish them. Be so good as to tell Miss Moore that her absenting herself, gives me pain, and that I must beg of her to make a point of attending in future.”

“I will certainly obey your wishes,” observed Mrs. Beauchamp; “but Miss Moore, though a very amiable person in many respects, does not appear to me to wish to have her conduct interfered with. It is possible my words may have no effect.”

“That is not likely. If she is a sensible person—as I should fancy she was—she must see the duty when it is pointed out to her. What I wish is, that I myself, and all who are

in any way connected with me, should give an example to the people of attention to their duties. Horner wishes much to procure a better attendance of an afternoon. The poor souls say they have but one holiday, and cannot spend it all in church, and so they go lounging to the public-house. Now, if we excuse ourselves from the duty, who have not that excuse, how on earth can we expect them to think of it seriously ! I assure you, I find it difficult enough with my numberless affairs to go, and should often let myself off, if I did not think of this. Tell Miss Moore my wishes, make as civil a message as you can, and let me see her as regular and attentive as Annette is. She cannot do better than copy Annette."

Mrs. Beauchamp promised, and fulfilled her promise. She had a dry way of speaking, especially when delivering a message, which made it the more unpalatable. It was given, however, very faithfully, and Lord Singleton's

motives, in wishing for an alteration in her conduct, duly set forth.

Sybil listened to her with a glow in her cheek and a sparkle in her eyes, but she preserved her dignity unruffled. When Mrs. Beauchamp ceased to speak, she merely inclined her head, and answered—"Very well."

This was on a Monday, and, the message having been delivered, the subject was forgotten. On the Sunday afternoon following, when the time for setting off arrived, Mrs. Beauchamp sent Annette to Sybil's room to beg her to get ready.

Annette did so, and was closing the door, as she hurried on to prepare herself, when Sybil called to her to say, with great civility—"Thank you for coming, Annette, but I have no thoughts of going to church this afternoon."

"Are you not well?" Annette asked.

"Oh, yes!—particularly well."

“I thought ——” Annette began, then discreetly paused, and only said—“Mamma sent me; I will tell her,” and hastened away.

Mrs. Beauchamp was perplexed, but, unwilling to have her own authority compromised, by insisting on what would not be performed, she made no further efforts to persuade Sybil to accompany them.

Lord Singleton, always hurried, but always punctual, was standing at the church door to see them come. He felt a little elation of spirit in the thought of thus bringing Miss Moore to a sense of her duty, and a little self-congratulation in reflecting on the good use he made of his authority.

It was with mortification, therefore, that he saw the Beauchamp family arrive alone.

“Where is Miss Moore?” he asked, quickly.

“She said she had no intention of coming with us,” said Mrs. Beauchamp.

Lord Singleton contracted his brow and bit his lip.

“Young ladies are difficult subjects to deal with, Lord Singleton,” observed Mr. Beauchamp, laughing.

“Who would rear three daughters fair,
Must hold a steady bridle ;”

and only a father can do that.”

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Beauchamp,” said Lord Singleton ; “any one can who has authority—can, and ought ; and I shall.”

“I only mean that overstrained authority is apt to break.”

“Yes—yes,” said Lord Singleton, recovering himself, “I know ; but there’s no fear of that in this case. But come along ; the bell has done ringing, and Horner will be in a fever if we stand gossiping here.”

The following morning, as Lord Singleton was walking about the Park, followed by his gardener, considering the spots in which to

begin some new plantation, he observed Miss Moore at a little distance alone. It was too good an opportunity to be lost, and hastily saying—"I want to speak to Miss Moore, Sinclair, you had better go on without me," he followed her with rapid steps.

"Miss Moore," he called once or twice, and Sybil turned about, and calm and cold awaited him.

"Good-morning," he said. "Pray don't stand still this frosty day. I will walk a little way with you if you will allow me."

Sybil inclined her head and walked on unmovedly grave; he attended her in silence. Her stately demeanour gave him a sensation of awkwardness, but it was not a sensation natural to him, and he soon flung it off.

"I begged Mrs. Beauchamp to give you a message, Miss Moore," he began; "I hope she delivered it correctly."

“ I received a message,” replied Sybil ;
“ whether correctly given or not, I cannot
say.”

“ But you did not attend to it.”

She deigned no answer.

“ You will, I hope,” he said, anxiously,
“ attend to it in future. I wish much that
you should, and there was surely nothing un-
reasonable in my request.”

“ The request might be reasonable, but it
was unreasonable to suppose I should attend
to it.”

“ How so ? Why ?” asked he, colouring.

“ Because you could have no reason to
suppose that I should regulate my conduct
by your desire. Forgive me for speaking
plainly.”

“ I did suppose it,” he said, hastily. “ It
appears, then, that you do not intend to do
your duty, merely because you are advised to
do it.”

“By no means,” she replied, with provoking calmness. “What is right I hope I shall do, but I shall not do what is right because you wish it.”

Lord Singleton bit his lip to restrain an intemperate answer. He recovered himself, and, after a moment, more coolly resumed the conversation.

“It is a childish thing to recriminate, Miss Moore. Sensible men and women ought to argue without anger. Let me put the matter before you in its true light. We are placed in particular relations to each other, and nothing but my own will can free us from the responsibility of those relations. I have been invested by your father with authority over you ; and, whether you hear me or not, I, for my part, consider his wish as sacred, and shall at all times try to do my duty to you ; and this ——

“With authority,” Sybil interrupted him,

her eyes flashing with indignation, “you are not invested! My father entrusted to you the management of my worldly concerns, and I am grateful to you for the interest you take in them. There is no further relationship between us.”

“You are mistaken,” he replied, gravely; “the trust which I was asked to accept, and which I accepted, extends further than you suppose. I was invited to be your guardian, your friend, and your adviser, and such I will be to the best of my power. You need not suppose, however, that I shall make any undue use of my office. Force is a poor weapon to use—all I hope is to influence; and if I can influence you to do what I think right, I shall consider myself happy.”

“I hope,” said Sybil, proudly, “that wherever good can be learned I shall learn it. I am not ashamed to confess that, since I have been here, I have found myself deficient in

many duties I ought to practice ; and when I see what is right I shall do it, let the knowledge come from whence it may. But when I do my duty, it will be because I see it, and not because you wish me to do it. I utterly deny your right to interfere in my personal concerns, and I take this opportunity to tell you once and for ever that nothing shall ever induce me to submit to it."

"It will be in vain to deny it," he cried, losing the command of his temper. "I know my duty, and I will do it in spite of your pride and your ingratitude ; you may resist me if you please, but I will persevere in my efforts to do you good, and to make you happy, let your resistance be what it may. Good morning."

And bowing to her he hastened away.

Sybil looked after him, her proud yet childish heart swelling with triumph. To have baffled and insulted him was a sensation so

sweet, that she stood still with fluttering pulses to enjoy it.

A few moments passed, and he was again by her side; a slight glow on his cheek and anxiety and eagerness on his bright face.

“I lost my temper, Miss Moore,” he said, “and I have returned to say I am sorry for it. What I said was right, but my manner was wrong, and I sincerely beg your pardon.”

He smiled, extended his hand, shook hers cordially, and was gone.

Sybil again looked after him, and this time in some surprize. His re-appearance in a degree damped her joy in having insulted him, and she walked part of the way home in a perplexed and uneasy state of mind. As the impression of his last words however faded, and his former unwarrantable assumption of authority recurred, the perplexity gave way to a new sense of gratification in having so entirely and obviously gained the mastery over him.

Sybil had an honest nature, and having been convinced by reflection that Lord Singleton was perfectly right in the wish he had expressed, no 'ugly pride' prevented her from yielding the disputed point.

After luncheon on the Sunday following, she begged Annette to call her when it was time to get ready, as she intended to go to church.

"I am so glad," Annette said, with unthinking pleasure—"you cannot think how anxious Lord Singleton has been."

"I go because I think it right, not because it is Lord Singleton's wish," replied Sybil, coldly. After a moment's thought she added with some seriousness—"You have been better taught than I have, Annette, and in most things I have to learn of you; but there is one thing that you may learn of me—you and all here—and that is, that there is a higher rule of right and wrong than Lord Singleton's will."

“You are very severe, Sybil,” said Annette, colouring deeply, as her quick conscience owned there might be truth in Sybil’s words, but it was not then that the discovery of that truth took a real root within.

Lord Singleton saw Sybil’s entrance into church with a most pleasurable sensation. It was, upon the whole, a drawn battle, and the feeling of defeat was, therefore, unfelt on either side. He had the good taste and good sense to make no comment on her concession to herself, but to Annette he said—

“I rather admire her, Annette, not for her pride and nonsense, but because she is not ashamed to do what is right when she is convinced it is right. I was afraid I had made a mistake in speaking to her, but now I am convinced that if one only does what one thinks best, things always go straight in the end. Some people mind a row. I don’t. Explosions now and then are useful things.”

To himself he said, regretfully—"If I had but had her in my hands a few years ago, when the character is more pliable, I would have made her a valuable woman. Now, I am sometimes afraid it is too late. But no," he added; "too late is a fool's reflection. Nothing that is alive can be beyond improvement. A fine, brave character, like hers, must be capable of everything that is good, and good I will make her"—and his breast heaved with a new emotion in the thought.

From this time he began to watch her more—not only to watch, as he had done, the movements of her head, but the indications of her character. His interest changed from an interest in her as his ward, to an interest of a more personal nature.

The change, however, produced no change in his manner or demeanour. He remained kind and cordial, but distant—sought no intimacy—inquired little into her opinions—

after a civil greeting, often scarcely appeared to notice her presence.

This behaviour did not win Sybil to submission. Naturally disposed to like and expect attention, some inward and unacknowledged pique was felt in his conduct, and she, in return, maintained a stately reserve.

CHAPTER IX.

“ He had a frank and pleasant look,
A cheerful eye and accent bland,
His very speech and manner spoke
The generous heart and open hand.
About him all was gay or grand—
He had the praise of great and small—
He bought, improv’d, projected, plann’d—
And reigned a prince at Greyling Hall.”
SIR EUSTACE GREY.

IN the spring, Lord Singleton went, for two or three months, to London. He was not fond of London, nor ever left Beauchamp Park without regret; but he said his position and habits required the change, and he submitted to it with a good grace. When in London,

he mixed little in general society, but his active mind found much to see, to think of, and to do. He was interested in politics, and would express an opinion (and one almost always sound and good) when a subject peculiarly excited his attention, but he was not ambitious of political importance, and resisted many counsels to put himself forward. Annette, whose affectionate admiration of his character made her earnestly desire that it should be widely known and widely esteemed, had often and often urged him to become a frequent speaker; but he took a juster view of his abilities than she did.

“No, no, Annette,” he one day replied; ‘I am not an orator. I can express myself pretty well when I have a thing to say, but my style is homely, and if I tried to make it otherwise, I should make an ass of myself. Now and then I see a small thing that nobody else seems to see, and then I say it out with-

out any fear, and sometimes I do good ; but I don't see all the windings, and turnings, and distant dangers of politics—in fact, I never turned my attention to them ; so don't wish me to be a failure, which is what I should be if I was as ambitious as you are."

" You always say you can do what you please," she suggested.

" But I don't wish it, Annette. Perhaps I could make some figure if I pleased, but I don't wish it. I hate London, and London society, and London scandal, and London fuss. I should not go to London at all if it were not for this reason, that I hate a cramped narrow-minded man still more, and that is what I should be if I always lived here. No, no, my place is here, and to be here is what I am most fit for. If all the world knew their own places as well as I do, we should have fewer asses than we now have."

He returned from London in the beginning

of July ; and when he returned, he came accompanied by two young men, one of whom was his cousin, Lowry Beauchamp.

No young men could be more dissimilar in tastes and habits than these two cousins were, and each felt something more and stronger than indifference to the society of the other. Lord Singleton, however, was thoroughly good-natured ; and when Lowry Beauchamp expressed a wish to revisit a spot he had not seen since his boyhood, an invitation was given as cordial in manner as it was civil in words. Not that Lowry Beauchamp had any fond or sentimental recollections of his boyhood—that was not in his character. His wish was to laugh at his cousin, to watch, to criticize, to speculate on the future ; but this wish being less easy to express, he worded his wish in the manner related above. Lowry Beauchamp was, like Lord Singleton, an only son, and at this time a being left alone in

the world ; but this was almost the only point of resemblance between them. He was poor, yet rich enough to be idle—poor, yet rich enough to indulge his indolent and luxurious tastes at his pleasure. His face and figure were handsome—the former much more regularly so than the young lord's ; his manners were pleasing if he chose ; his conversation was agreeable when he chose ; nor was his character devoid of good qualities—but he was selfish, and as charity covers a multitude of sins, so selfishness cuts at the root of all virtues.

The life of the inhabitants of the cottage had passed happily away during Lord Singleton's absence. Its even tenour had been diversified by a visit to the sea-side, a change commonly made at this time of the year for Annette's health, which, though rarely ailing, was often delicate, and was apt to suffer from the cold winds of the spring. Sybil, active

and hardy, enjoyed herself with eager enjoyment. They returned to the cottage a month before Lord Singleton's return, and from that time the perpetual expectation of his appearance kept all things lively and on the alert. It was not Annette only who felt that Lord Singleton was always doing something to make an interest. So disposed are human minds to a kind of idolizing—so prone to hang their interest on a single character, that Sybil notwithstanding her determined indifference, was infected with the universal epidemic, and felt, and frankly acknowledged that the day was dull, in which, from some quarter or other, tidings of him failed to arise.

Lord Singleton and his guests arrived late at night—but the sunny summer morning aroused at an early hour even the indolent Londoner, Lowry Beauchamp. The sunbeams darted into his room, the birds sang loudly, the mowers whetted their scythes, and though

he bestowed considerable abuse on these and other country sounds, yet they indisposed him to sleep, and he arose. Once up he dressed and went out, and once out he pronounced it 'delicious.' The grass yet spangled with dew, the fresh scent of the flowers, and the glowing colours of the roses, tempted him on to look and to enjoy, and with a kind of half contempt at his own pleasure he sauntered about admiring and alone.

This innocent frame of mind shortly, however, lost its novelty, and a hope that the breakfast hour was near brought his steps back to the house. As he approached it, wandering about like himself in the enjoyment of the morning air, he met the old housekeeper. She had seen three Lord Singletons at Beauchamp Park, and her devotion to the family embraced, more or less, all who bore the name of Beauchamp. For the sake of his name she had tolerated Lowry in his

boyhood, but he had not been according, to her standard, a true Beauchamp, and nothing but his name had preserved to him her respect.

He remembered her, however, more as a friend than an enemy; as soon as he saw her he called to her and kissed his hand; and on his overtaking her raised her up from a profound curtsy by a cordial shake. He then, after a polite inquiry after her health, entered into familiar conversation.

“I hope you think I am grown, Mrs. Dawson.”

“Law, sir.”

“I hope you think I am grown handsome.”

“Law, sir.”

“What a fine young man the young lord has become. It must do your heart good to see him.”

“That it does, sir, and handsome as he is, he is better than he is handsome.”

“That is delightful to hear. Well, Mrs. Dawson, when are you to have a Lady Singleton; I suppose you expected one from London this year.”

“I hoped so, sir, but my lord knows best.”

“I suppose you all wish him to marry?”

“We do, sir; for my part, I often say, I shall not die happy, till I rock a young lord on my knee.”

“That is a gratification which I could be content to resign,” said Lowry Beauchamp. “He ought to make haste, Mrs. Dawson; it is hard upon me to have him living like a bachelor, it gives me unpleasant agitation. Why don’t you advise him to marry! What sort of a girl is Miss Beauchamp, would she do for your lady?”

“She’s as sweet a young lady as ever I saw,” said the old woman, warmly.

“Well then, let us marry my lord to her at once.”

“Once I thought it would be so, but it seems I made a mistake. My lord knows best, and we won’t say any more about that.”

“There is no other young lady down here, I suppose?” he inquired carelessly.

“There is my lord’s ward, Miss Moore, a beautiful young lady.”

“My lord’s ward! why, where did he get a ward?” he exclaimed, with surprise.

“She was left to the care of my lord, and he put her to live with Mr. Beauchamp.”

“Indeed! this is news to me. And she is a beautiful young lady, is she?”

“Beautiful indeed, but not so sweet as Miss Beauchamp.”

“Perhaps my lord thinks she is sweeter. Would she do for Lady Singleton?”

“If my lord chooses her. Whoever my lord chooses, will be the best.”

“What a fine morning, Mrs. Dawson. I won’t keep you any longer. Shall we soon have any breakfast?”

"The bell will ring for prayers in five minutes," said Mrs. Dawson, looking at her watch, and curtseying, she withdrew.

"Evidently Mrs. D. thinks there is something on the *tapis*," said Lowry Beauchamp to himself, "I shall soon make it out. What a fool I am to care. If ever a man was made out to be the father of twelve sons, it is Singleton. I might as soon have expected old Jacob to die a bachelor. I wish he would set about it soon, I hate this uncertainty, and yet, whenever the day comes, it will be a crushing blow."

As he re-entered the house, a great bell rang, and following some servants who were hurrying along, he came to the hall in which Lord Singleton stood. The latter nodded to his cousin, and then proceeded to read a few verses of strong moral advice from the Book of Proverbs, in an emphatic voice. When that was done, he repeated three or four prayers, and the service was concluded.

“Short and sweet,” said Lowry Beauchamp, approaching his cousin.

“I am no friend to long prayers,” replied Lord Singleton. “Will you be so good, Lowry, as to go and call Herbert, and show him the breakfast-room? A man is waiting to see me; but I will come to you there in five minutes.

“Oh! the fatigue of a busy man,” soliloquised Lowry, as he went in obedience to his orders.

The party of three were soon seated at breakfast. Lowry Beauchamp, proud of his early rising, as the performers of that feat usually are, boasted much of the beauty of the morning.

“If I had known you meant to get up, I should have been down to show you the improvements,” said Lord Singleton; “but I thought you were an inveterate slug-gard.”

“ I do nothing by rule, but all as the whim takes me,” said his cousin.

“ And a very bad life that is,” said Colonel Herbert.

“ It suits *me*. It is an interest to me to wonder at what o’clock I shall get up to-morrow. So it is to my servant. I provide interest for two. Singleton and his household have no such pleasure; they know he must be down on the stroke of nine. If you had been down at nine, Herbert, as you ought to have been, you would have had the profit and pleasure of seeing Singleton acting like a patriarch, and instructing his house and household after him.”

“ You would not have me act like a heathen, would you?” said Lord Singleton, hastily, fancying he heard a sneer in the words.

“ By no means. But why, Singleton, since you are so fitted to be a patriarch, why not be one in good earnest?—you are a very poor crea-

ture of a patriarch without a wife and family. I should esteem you a thousand times more if I saw you upholding the family in a proper way."

"All in good time," he said, laughing.

"I wonder you do not marry," observed Colonel Herbert. "I am as little dependent on society as most men; but I think I should find nine months' solitude a burden."

"When I find it a burden, I suppose I shall wish to marry; but at present I do not; and, until I am at leisure, I hope I shall not. If I were not very much in love, I should, I am certain, find a wife a bore; and, if I were in love, a wife would take up too much time. I am happier as I am."

"Shall you be such an ardent lover?" asked Colonel Herbert, laughing.

"I can't tell; but I think, if not an ardent lover, a wife must be a bore."

"I hear that, among your other occupa-

tions," said Lowry Beauchamp, watching his cousin's face as he spoke, "you have undertaken the superintendence of a young lady?"

"Well, what of that?" said Lord Singleton, quickly.

"Nothing on earth, only that I think it must be an interesting occupation to a young gentleman."

"As to that, I have little to do with her. I reserve my superintendence for great matters."

"Where do you keep her incarcerated?"

"She lives with Mr. Beauchamp."

"I hear that she is a beauty. When will you give me an opportunity of deciding that point?"

"When you please," replied Lord Singleton, his answers as short and cold as possible.

"I suppose she is an heiress, and that you have the administration of her properties."

“Pray, Lowry, leave my ward alone,” said Lord Singleton, hastily. “Do let us find some other conversation than girls and matrimony.”

“Your ward must be a very sacred person,” said his cousin, laughing, “if what I have said is liable to reprehension. Pray where did you pick her up?”

“I promised to be her guardian, when I was a boy, and when her father died I kept my word.”

“Her father then was indued with magical prescience in making his choice. He already foresaw what a sober, solemn, respectable guardian you would be. Perhaps, he also foresaw the inevitable necessity of your changing the sober guardian into the still more sober and respectable husband.

“Have done,” said Lord Singleton, angrily, “have you not sense enough to know that the suggestion of such an idea, will destroy all the

good I can do, and all Miss Moore's peace in life."

"My dear Singleton, I have not the most remote idea of suggesting it to Miss Anybody. I suppose in your house I may speak my thoughts freely?"

"Let us leave such trash alone. Herbert, are you fond of cricket? We are to have a village match this evening, and I must go down and see it. But I hope everybody will do what pleases them, and make themselves perfectly at home."

"The cricket-match will suit me well," replied his friend. "When I come to a new place I like to study the manners and customs of rich and poor. There will be a good field, I suppose, for observations in 'more senses than one.'"

"Then we will ride early. I am building a church, and I must go and see it—that will do after luncheon; for this morning I have several

things to do, and if you like to poke about with me I shall be very happy ; but please yourselves."

Colonel Herbert accompanied Lord Singleton. Lowry Beauchamp remained lounging in the garden with a book. He was annoyed when, on their return at luncheon time, he found that they had paid a visit to Mrs. Beauchamp, and that both the young ladies had been seen."

"You might have told me, Singleton, where you were going. I thought you were intending to poke after pigs and paupers."

"We did. Pigs, cows, schools, cottages, and everything else we passed by. Of course I went to pay my respects to Mrs. Beauchamp and Annette. But if you are anxious to see them you will have an opportunity this evening. They are all coming to the cricket match."

CHAPTER X.

“How often have I bless’d the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree.”

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

MRS. BEAUCHAMP with Zoé and the two young ladies were on the cricket ground before Lord Singleton arrived. Benches had been placed for their accommodation, and they sat down in a sunny spot and watched the game. But Annette’s eyes were wandering. All was dull and flat till Lord Singleton came.

“Here they come, mamma!” she exclaimed, joyfully, speaking her thought with fearless ease.

“Who?” asked Sybil. “Oh! I see. Is that other gentleman your cousin?”

“He has, unfortunately, the same name,” said Annette; “but I don’t call him the least bit of a cousin.”

“He is the same relation to you that Lord Singleton is, and you call him a cousin.”

“Cousin is an indefinite term,” said Annette, laughing, “sometimes one may acknowledge it and sometimes not. I don’t want Mr. Beauchamp for a cousin.”

“And why not?”

“Don’t speak thoughtlessly, Annette,” observed her mother. “She has never seen Mr. Beauchamp, Miss Moore.”

“My cousin, Lowry Beauchamp, is extremely anxious to make your acquaintance, Mrs. Beauchamp,” said Lord Singleton, as he

and his friend approached. "I received a severe rebuke for calling upon you without him this morning."

Mrs. Beauchamp had very perfect manners. She made the most appropriate speech and introduced Lowry to his cousins and to Miss Moore.

He scanned each with a scrutinizing gaze. He had hardly known himself, hardly acknowledged, at least, the cause of his interest in Miss Moore, yet when he saw her, and owned, that even to his criticizing eyes, she was beautiful, the cause was plain. He felt that danger there must be for his cousin, and though he had not certainly the faintest hope of Lord Singleton's remaining unmarried, this did not prevent a desire to torment him in the present case.

They were quick, vague thoughts that passed through his mind, and these were blended with admiration of Sybil's face, and a

desire of amusement and excitement for his own sake.

Though Miss Moore was the object that attracted him, it was by Annette that he placed, and to Annette that he addressed, himself. She endeavoured to be civil, but her thoughts were not with him. The game that had been dull, was now full of excitement. Lord Singleton had expressed his interest in one particular player, and on his success, Annette was consequently bent. While he ran she stood almost breathless, and twice Mr. Beauchamp spoke to her, and was unheard.

He bit his lip; he was not accustomed to be overlooked.

“Annette, Mr. Beauchamp addressed you,” said her mother, at the second offence.

Annette blushed, turned to him, and begged his pardon, but owned that she could not attend.

“Does not cricket amuse you?” she asked.

“Undoubtedly in this society I shall be scorned for the confession,” he replied, “nevertheless, the truth is the truth, no, it does not.”

“Never mind him, Annette,” cried Lord Singleton, seeing what had passed, “let him please himself. Come up here, you will see much better.”

Annette took Zoé’s hand, and joined Lord Singleton and Colonel Herbert, who were on a bank a little above. Mrs. Beauchamp seated herself on a bench, Sybil on another, and after a short observation of those about him, Lowry Beauchamp stretched himself on the ground ; there he remained in silence.

He had quick discernment of character, not in its best and highest qualities, these were apt to escape him, but of the lighter kind, especially in all the shades and varieties of vanity. He could see at a glance, where attentions never failed to flatter, and where their want never failed to pique ; nevertheless,

he was at a loss how to classify Sybil ;—her manners were so unconscious, she was so dignified, even if expectant of attention, that he was uncertain whether to pay her at once the attentions that were her due, or by piquing, to draw a greater degree of observation and interest to himself. He at length decided on the latter course.

It will be perceived that Mr. Lowry Beauchamp was a young gentleman who had formed no very high estimate of women, and who had, on the contrary, formed a high one of the importance of his own attentions.

After a time, Mrs. Beauchamp, hearing Lord Singleton loudly applaud, joined Annette and Zoé on the bank, and Sybil and Lowry Beauchamp alone remained below. With considerable self-denial he allowed five minutes more to pass before he spoke ; then, when he felt certain his silence was becoming remarkable,

he slowly rose, and took the seat which Mrs. Beauchamp had vacated.

“You alone, Miss Moore,” he began, bending towards her, “appear to be uninfected with the universal activity of this place.”

“Because I don’t understand the game,” she replied, quietly. “If I did, I dare say it would amuse me too. As it is, I only see people walk up and down, and I don’t know what they mean.”

“What a picture of life!” he said; “everybody walks up and down, and we don’t know what they mean. What curious creatures human beings are!”

Sybil laughed, but her attention was caught.

“My brain aches with all Singleton has done to-day,” he continued. “It is hard he should do the work, and I should bear the pain.”

“Lord Singleton does a great deal of good,” Sybil said, indifferently.

“You think so, do you?” he asked, watching her countenance, narrowly. “I sometimes doubt the benefits of such universal meddling.”

“I have no means of judging whether or not good is actually done,” Sybil said again, in the same indifferent tone. “All I mean is, that he intends to do good.”

“There is no love for Singleton in that voice,” he said internally, and immediately indulged himself in the sarcastic and half-contemptuous inquiry; “Do you join in the admiration for his character, which is the frenzy of these parts?”

But he had either misunderstood her, or gone too far. While her hazel eyes flashed, and her cheek glowed at his freedom, she haughtily said—

“Lord Singleton is my guardian; I do not discuss his character with strangers,”

She looked so beautiful in her wrath and

disdain, that he was lost in contemplation for a moment, and when he roused himself, it was with anxiety that he said, "I beg your pardon—being Singleton's cousin, I felt at liberty to discuss his merits, and forgot, at the moment, the position in which you stand."

Sybil made no answer, and a silence followed.

Before he spoke again, a ball struck against the trunk of a tree, and being turned in an unexpected direction, rebounded violently towards the place where they sat. It was but an instant's fear—for it did not reach the spot—but, in the instant, Lowry Beauchamp started up, and went backwards: Sybil sat perfectly still.

He returned with an exclamation on his lips, which made her say, with a smile—

"A man! and afraid?"

"Yes, afraid," he replied, unabashed.

"And a man to confess it," said Lord Sin-

gleton, who had hastened to Sybil, when he saw the danger. "Miss Moore, forgive me the word, you are fool-hardy."

"I knew it would not reach us," she said, smiling; "I was not afraid."

"Then, I wish you would be afraid," he said, good-humouredly. "However, that was a mere chance; it will not happen again;" and he returned to his place on the bank above them.

Lowry Beauchamp saw Lord Singleton's solicitude for his ward's safety with anxiety and suspicion; although, in truth, his manner was far more good-natured than *empressé*. He resumed his seat with a more determined purpose to make a favourable impression, and his efforts were not unsuccessful. Sybil was young, fond of novelty and amusement, excitable and pleased with admiration. These qualities had laid dead for some months, but they were alive and awake within her; and she gave no

ungracious attention to the insensible flattery of manner of one whose conversation amused and interested her.

A dispute having arisen in which the decision of the umpire was somewhat loudly called in question; Lord Singleton hastened down to the disputing parties to settle the point by his paramount authority. At his request, Annette and Mrs. Beauchamp went with him, "That we may have no bad language," he said. Colonel Herbert remained behind.

He seated himself by Sybil on the bench she occupied, and said, smiling, as his eye followed the eager steps of the young lord—

"I have been extremely interested and pleased to day by the sight of Singleton's manner of life among his people. A sober, sluggish kind of benevolence is common enough, but he has a zest for doing good which I have rarely seen before. Two days

in his society and I feel I should catch the fever, so genuine is his enthusiasm."

"I have been suggesting to Miss Moore," observed Lowry Beauchamp, "with all reverence to Singleton, that I somewhat question the benefits he confers. He makes himself the machine on which all his people's virtues turn, and when his eye from any cause comes to be withdrawn, the whole system will go to ruin."

"Perhaps so," said Colonel Herbert; "but man can but do what he can. The future is not in his power. I have no doubt Singleton is not always wise. Young enthusiasm is usually liable to error; but what I like is, the spirit that animates him and the return of attachment it meets. A person of very indolent habits, however wise and benevolent he might be, would never excite the idolatry which Singleton excites."

"Let no one depend on the idolatry of

his fellow men," said Lowry Beauchamp. "It is all very well while the sun shines; but it never lasts through a storm."

"That may be all very true," argued Colonel Herbert. "I have very little dependence on the stability of any good thing in human nature; but I think the best part of men is their hearts. If that can be touched there is better hope for them than from any other cause. Character is the thing that really influences in the world, and justly; I am much disposed to hero worship. What do you say, Miss Moore—I hope you agree with me?"

"Yes," she said, slowly, "as far as my *wishes* go, but hero worship is more full of disappointment than anything else in this disappointing world."

"That is too severe—much too severe for you," said Colonel Herbert. "Hero worship will not disappoint if we do not form exagger-

ated and unreal pictures. I will give Singleton as an instance ; nothing on earth I am convinced could ever tempt him to a low or dishonourable thought or action, or taint the disinterested and unselfish temper of his mind ; and when one feels that about a man, I say he is fit to be a hero."

As Colonel Herbert ceased to speak, Annette and Mrs. Beauchamp returned, and Sybil was saved from making an answer she did not desire to make.

"Is all amicable?" Colonel Herbert asked of Annette.

"Oh! yes," she replied, eagerly, "as soon as ever Lord Singleton spoke they were quite satisfied."

He smiled, and, as they slowly left the field, walked by her side. He was pretty sure that she would agree in his views of hero worship.

Lowry Beauchamp still attended Sybil.

“I think,” he said, “you feel, like me, that to listen to the paltry disputes of peasants, is not the school for a hero.”

“I don’t know,” she replied, thoughtfully. “I am not quite sure.”

“I would by no means say that small actions are not heroic,” he continued, “but my idea of a hero requires something of self-sacrifice. Now, though I have the highest respect and real affection for Singleton, I do not think there is much sacrifice in his benevolence. I should say that it is his pleasure to domineer.”

Sybil coloured and made no answer, but he perceived that she responded to what he said.

The two parties separated when they left the cricket ground, and Lord Singleton and his friends returned home.

As soon as they were out of sight, Annette said, suddenly—

“I am very glad to have seen Mr. Beau-

champ, for now I may dislike him as much as I please."

"Hush, Annette," said her mother. "What a strange way of speaking of a relative!"

"And why do you wish to dislike him so much?" asked Sybil.

"I only mean," replied Annette, blushing at her mother's reproof, "that I have always had a prejudice against him, and now that I have seen him I am sure I was right."

"I think Mr. Beauchamp is much handsomer than Lord Singleton," lisped Zoé, who either from a child's perversity, or because he treated her in too infantine a manner for her dignity—was never so well pleased as when she could set herself against him.

"My dear Zoé!" exclaimed Annette, quickly and indignantly, but then, sobering her too eager manner, she added—"But I was not speaking of looks, that is, of handsomeness. I think he looks cold and selfish, and I could never trust his face."

“Don’t condemn faces so loudly, my dear,” said Mr. Beauchamp, coming suddenly behind his daughter, and making her start. “And I must add, don’t condemn characters on one day’s acquaintance. ‘Charity thinketh no evil.’”

“Annette does not like any variety in human nature,” said Sybil, smiling. “She would have all the world cut on her own pattern, and whatever is not like that pattern, she thinks it her bounden duty to hate.”

“I like people to be unselfish and honest, and to have spirit in them,” said Annette. “Artificial, indolent, languid people I cannot bear; but I did not mean to be ill-natured about Mr. Beauchamp, and I will try and like him better if I ought. Not that I can,” she murmured to herself.

Colonel Herbert and Lowry Beauchamp called at the Cottage the following morning. When the door opened to admit them, Annette

was on the floor, surrounded by books, and Sybil was in her own place in the window, drawing. Annette's books had been sent to her by Lord Singleton. He had requested her to select from and arrange them, having brought them from London, either to distribute in his various schools, or to make an addition to the reading-room established in the winter.

She jumped up on the appearance of the visitors, but two or three questions from Colonel Herbert betrayed the nature of her occupation, and very soon she was on her knees on the floor again, while she submitted the books to his interested inspection.

Lowry Beauchamp meanwhile seated himself by Sybil, and, being something of an artist, entered with an enthusiasm, partly real and partly affected, into her favourite pursuit.

He found her far more cold in manner, and far less disposed to be amused than he had

left her on the preceding day. Sybil was not at all aware in how great a degree Annette's opinions influenced her mind; it was a growing influence; she could not help trusting to the clearness of her moral sight, and the coldness of this day was owing to the dislike she had the evening before so decidedly expressed. Sybil knew she had been pleased with Lowry Beauchamp's conversation. She was afterwards half ashamed that she had been so. Her reserve and backwardness only roused him to more determined efforts. With no settled purpose in his head, with none at least beyond tormenting his cousin and amusing himself, he was resolved to engage her attention, and being so resolved, he succeeded. Sybil was amused, and suffered herself to be amused; came down from her stateliness, and conversed at her ease. The discovery of a mutual acquaintance at length placed them on very friendly terms.

“Berkeley Priory!” he exclaimed, as he turned over a book of sketches; “how or why Berkeley Priory?”

“Why not?” said Sybil, smiling.

“Because she is a friend of mine.”

“And also a friend of mine.”

“Indeed!” he cried, in a strong accent of surprise. “It is not anything extraordinary in the fact of our knowing the same person,” he explained, smiling, “that provoked that, indeed! but I *am* surprised. There is nothing astonishing that she should be a friend of mine, but I am astonished to hear she is a friend of yours. How could it come about if I may ask such a question?”

“I was at school with her daughter Honoria Berkeley, and I went home with her for the holidays last Christmas.”

“Easily explained, as most mysteries are. Miss Berkeley I suppose you know is now *out* and a beauty, that is, she would be a beauty

if her mother was not one. What a handsome, good-tempered, indefatigable person Mrs. Berkeley is. People say she toils for pleasure, but I say pleasure flows from her without toil."

"I was very much amused at Berkeley Priory," Sybil said.

"No doubt; it is in a certain way the most exciting house I know, sometimes too much so. What were they doing when you were there, for there is always something going on; though in a different style, Mrs. Berkeley is as active as Singleton."

"Very different," Sybil said, laughing. "I think acting was the chief amusement when I was there. Acting and tableaux."

"And you were 'a tableau,' of course. Mrs. Berkeley would never have let you escape. I wish I had been there. What character did you personate?"

"Joan of Arc was the principal one. There

were a series of tableaux on the life of Joan of Arc,—extremely well got up, I believe, at least so an artist said who was there.”

“Is your name Sybil?” Lowry Beauchamp suddenly inquired.

“Yes,” she said, in some surprise.

“Ah! then now I remember. I was at the Priory, last Easter, and the name of Sybil as a natural genius and born actress, was on all their lips. To confess the truth, I paid very little attention. When a name is repeated overmuch, I get heartily sick of it, and I little expected that I should ever meet the Sybil myself.”

“They made more of it than was true,” Sybil said. “Mrs. Berkeley’s worst fault is, that she is a flatterer.”

“Is it flattery to praise the absent?”

“I think,” Sybil said, smiling, “that in flattering the absent she flattered her own tableaux.—I am not very good-natured to say

so, but I think she likes to make much of what is done in her house."

"True and discriminating; and as to good-nature, what is a fair field for observation if not the follies of our fellow men? When I laugh at Singleton, and his busy ways, I am far from considering myself ill-natured."

Before Sybil replied, an announcement was made by Zoé, that she saw Lord Singleton coming. Lowry Beauchamp slowly rose, drew his chair into the midst of the parcels of books, and was found inspecting them when his cousin entered. His satirical remarks, as he read out some passages of 'Tales for children,' were, as is commonly said, 'as good as a play.' Annette laughed, Lord Singleton, reluctant, yet amused, sat upon a table to listen, and when he was gone, Mrs. Beauchamp pronounced upon his manners and conversation a dry but exceedingly flattering eulogy.

CHAPTER XI.

“ Your grace shall pardon me, I will not back.
I am too highborn to be propertied,
To be a secondary at control,
To any sovereign state throughout the world.”

KING JOHN.

LORD SINGLETON was a very kind and attentive host, but his attentions proceeded more from civility and good-nature than from genuine pleasure. He was too fond of following his own ways, and too self-dependent to need or desire society for its own sake; and though he liked the company of those who suited him, he, in a much greater degree, disliked those who did not suit. He was well pleased to

have a sensible person like Colonel Herbert to talk to, but the ways and habits of his cousin jarred with his, and were a perpetual source of irritation to his temper. He restrained himself from duty and civility's sake, but the restraint was galling.

Under these circumstances, it was a great relief that his guests were disposed to amuse themselves. Lowry Beauchamp had taste as an artist and some love for the beauties of scenery. He expressed a wish to visit all the fine prospects, of which there were many, in the neighbourhood. Colonel Herbert, without sharing strongly in either of these tastes, had, with the natural bent of an observant mind, a desire to see all that was to be seen wherever he went. Lord Singleton, therefore, furnished his guests with horses and directions, and then, as he expressed it in more forcible language than was common to him, "thanked his stars that he was rid of them."

Lowry Beauchamp was not satisfied, however, with Colonel Herbert's society. He persuaded, and without much difficulty, Mrs. Beauchamp to be curious also, and during the ten days of Colonel Herbert's stay, three or four excursions, the weather being extremely fine, were taken in company with Mrs. Beauchamp, her daughters, and Sybil. Mrs. Beauchamp's acquiescence in Lowry Beauchamp's proposals was given readily, for two reasons—first and avowedly, as she said to Mr. Beauchamp, “because Annette saw but little good society—and society was useful to the mind and manners of young ladies;” secondly and unavowedly, because she perceived a dawning fancy for her daughter in Colonel Herbert's mind, and without a thought of forwardness or matchmaking, was very willing to allow it fair play.

Unobtrusively, for he was most desirous to escape observation, Lowry Beauchamp, on

these and other occasions, continued his endeavours to engage Sybil's attention. It was a more difficult matter than he had anticipated. She puzzled him; when he had formed a theory of her character, some chance observation overthrew it, and it was in her best qualities that he was especially at fault. When he was confident of having made a favourable impression, he would suddenly discover that she was in no ways regarding him. But that which chiefly puzzled him, was, as to the opinion she had formed, and the feelings she entertained, for Lord Singleton. He made her the depository of his reflections regarding the young lord, and these reflections were made in no unfriendly tone, but with a playful sarcasm of word and manner, which is far more depreciating than abuse. In these Sybil never joined, but still she allowed them, and occasionally, when made with more than usual drollery, she was provoked into a smile;

nevertheless, he could not feel secure that there was not more of admiration and interest than he desired to find.

“As I and Herbert rode here this morning,” he said to her one day, while watching the progress of a sketch she was taking, “we had a discussion on the subject of selfishness.—What is selfishness, how do you define it?”

“To follow only our own pleasure, I suppose,” was Sybil’s quick reply.

“But then, if it be so, are not some very benevolent people as selfish as their neighbours. There are some, to whom labouring for others is a pleasure, is a passion. They please themselves as much in doing a work of benevolence as another man in procuring a beautiful work of art, or taking a pleasant journey.”

“It may be so,” said Sybil, “but what comparison is there between a mind, whose care is to please itself, and the mind which has so overcome itself, as to have pleasure only in

doing good to others. I don't know," she continued, growing eager as she spoke, "why we should think virtue can only exist in sacrifice and pain; we can hardly suppose that the angels of heaven do otherwise than take pleasure in their offices of mercy."

"I know very little of angels," he said, smiling, "my remark extends only to common mortals. I will give an example. Singleton, for instance, who does more good in a day, than most men in a year."

"I don't like examples from individuals," Sybil said, coldly.

"But general observations are always vague, as vague as theories. I must show my meaning from individuals; let us return, then to Singleton;—now I admire his character as much as you do."

"As I do!" exclaimed Sybil, haughtily.

"Yes, was not what you said intended as a picture of Singleton? I assure you I understood it to be so."

“You may have understood it as you please.” she said, colouring, “Lord Singleton was not in my mind. I am only speaking generally.”

“Well, then, I will amend my speech. I admire Singleton in many ways, but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that he is a natural born despot. Born to royalty, he would have been an emperor of Russia without cruelty. Born in a humble rank, he would have been a school-master, threatening the rod very freely, but benevolently sparing it when he could. He delights in making a good use of his power, but the love of power is his master passion. Can you contradict me?”

Sybil smiled, and said nothing.

“You must understand, Miss Moore, that this question of selfishness arose from an attack made upon me by Herbert. I indulged in a slight sarcasm upon Singleton’s love of setting the world to rights. Herbert took up his cudgels and retorted, by charging me with

a life of self-pleasing, and complimented me by saying, that a man of my habits would never excite the attachment Singleton excites. I made my defence, by suggesting that the effects and outward signs of self-pleasing were according to the circumstances in which a man is placed, and that, without becoming a better man, I might, in Singleton's circumstances, do just what he does."

Sybil involuntarily shook her head, and slightly smiled.

"You think not," he said, with some mortification. "You little know, Miss Moore, the effect of circumstances in a man's life. I have lived for many years an isolated being, without a home, near ties, or specified duties. A man in that position must struggle through life as he can, and is not to be harshly judged, if self be more prominent in his mind than it is with those to whom much is given. You cannot imagine what it is to be without some natural object of life."

“Can I not?” Sybil said, sadly.

“Can you?—But no—there are some people who have a natural charm about them, which attracts and attaches even strangers. *They* cannot, whatever their circumstances, know what a temptation to selfishness an independent and isolated existence gives.”

Sybil blushed slightly, but answered with a warmth which lighted her face into one of its sudden flashes of extreme beauty, “Of course, there are temptations; one does not speak of *them*. The thing to admire, is the character which overcomes temptations whether they arise from the love of power, or the love of ease.”

Some words of involuntary admiration were upon his lips, as he watched her kindling countenance, but he was too little certain of pleasing her, to express them. He only smiled, and said, “An easy doctrine to preach, a hard one to practice.”

The difficulty of his pursuit excited his in-

terest more than he had intended or anticipated. Some thoughts, far more serious and definite than he had ever entertained, began vaguely to float through his mind, and with their entrance, his exertions, though kept under strict control, increased in vigour.

Lowry Beauchamp's desire to gain the favour of his ward, totally escaped Lord Singleton. He was not given to thought or suspicion on such subjects. If he had expressed any opinion at all, regarding the dangers of the present intercourse, he would probably have said, "Surely young ladies and gentlemen can associate for a week or ten days together, without any nonsense going on." But it so happened, that he never considered the matter at all. He was busy, as usual, and trusting to Mrs. Beauchamp to settle all proprieties regarding frequency of visits and such matters, he allowed his guests to amuse themselves as they pleased, without his disturbance or supervision.

It was Colonel Herbert who first dropped a hint on the subject.

Colonel Herbert's visit had been ostensibly for a fortnight, but at the end of nine or ten days, he said he must return to London. The evening before his departure, he walked down with Lowry Beauchamp, to pay a farewell visit at the Cottage.

"What sudden business takes you away?" said Lowry Beauchamp, as they walked. "Don't tell me regimental business, for I shall not believe you."

Colonel Herbert smiled, and said, "You are right, it is not regimental business."

"What then?"

"Are you particularly anxious to know another man's business; if you really are, I will tell you."

"I really am; curiosity possesses me. A man goes before his time if he is sent for, but you are not sent for; or if he is bored, but you

are not bored. The reason must, therefore, have singularity, and I wish to know it."

"My reason," said Colonel Herbert, "was simply this—I thought I had been here long enough for my own happiness."

"I thought so; but pray let me ask, why be so modest? You are able to marry when you please and where you please. You are pleased now. Therefore, why depart?"

"I am not young enough or romantic enough to throw away my happiness on a hopeless pursuit. Happily, I have seen the hopelessness before I have lost my peace of mind."

"You are the poorest, meanest-spirited fellow for a lover," said Lowry Beauchamp, laughing, "that ever I met with. Certainly, Dryden would not put you among the deservers of the fair."

"How perverse," said Colonel Herbert, thoughtfully, "are the chances of this world

in matters of affection. It sometimes makes me heartily weary of it. Here there is an affection than which I can fancy no happier possession in life ; but it is irremovably fixed on another person, and that other person neither sees it, nor, if he saw, would care to have it. Such is life, and such the waste of happiness in this world."

" You have been seeing a great deal during your stay here. I suppose you must mean Miss Beauchamp and Singleton, but I see no grounds for saying she is in love with him. They are great friends, and, as I understood Mrs. Beauchamp, have been more like brother and sister than anything else. If you care about her, pray do not be so easily daunted."

" In love with him is not a proper expression. There are no signs of a secret, pining attachment in Miss Beauchamp, but her heart is his, nevertheless. You are a poet, are you not ? Do you remember Byron's

expression, 'She was the ocean to the river of his thoughts?' So is Singleton to her, and vain would be the efforts of any man to turn that river to any other source. I have examined this narrowly for my own sake and, being convinced, I depart."

"As far as I can see, no woman has much chance with Singleton till years have abated the frenzy of his philanthropy."

"Perhaps; I am not so sure."

"In what direction?" asked his companion, quickly. "Among your discoveries, you have not surely given Singleton's heart to Miss Moore!"

"By no means to that degree; but whether it never will be so I should not allow myself to be sure. His interest in her welfare is so great, that I feel a spark may fan it into flame. You must remember that he naturally considers it due to his position, to be reserved in his attentions now."

Lowry Beauchamp made no answer to this, and they went on in silence to the Cottage. Annette and Mrs. Beauchamp were sitting together, reading. Sybil was not there. Lowry Beauchamp talked to Mrs. Beauchamp, but at every sound his eye glanced at the door, and with more and more of eagerness and impatience as the visit drew to a close.

Suddenly Sybil and Zoé appeared together at the window. Lowry Beauchamp started up, threw open a window, stepped out, and joined her. Colonel Herbert looked at him with an inquiring and penetrating glance; the movement had such quick *empressement*, that it brought a blush of surprize and shyness to Annette's cheek; and of the same or some other feeling, as Colonel Herbert perceived, to Sybil's also.

The following morning, Colonel Herbert took his departure. Lord Singleton rode with

him half way towards the station. As he went along, he bemoaned his fate in being left alone with Lowry Beauchamp:

“Your going is hard upon me, Herbert, I must say,” he said. “You promised to help me out with a good fortnight! What on earth I shall do with Lowry I cannot imagine. As to loitering about with him, as you do, I would much rather give up existence at once.”

“Don’t trouble yourself,” replied his companion. “Beauchamp is quite able to amuse himself.”

“I don’t wish to be uncivil. In our circumstances, it would be particularly wrong if I were uncivil. If I could see him take an interest in any single thing, I should even be glad to have him here. But he does not. The whole property may go to the dogs for what he cares, except in a mercenary view, I suppose.”

“Beauchamp is more interested here than you seem to be aware of,” said Colonel Herbert, smiling.

“How? In what single thing does he take an interest?”

“Miss Moore, I fancy.”

“Miss Moore!” cried Lord Singleton, a glow of passion rushing to his face. “Good Heavens! Herbert, what do you mean?”

“I hope I am not acting unfairly by Beauchamp, in giving you a hint of this. From various things you have said, I fancy such an attachment would be displeasing to you,——”

“Nothing on earth should ever induce me to consent to it,” he burst in with passionate violence.

“And as you appeared to have no idea of what was going on, it seemed to me hardly fair to leave you in the dark.”

“I am very much obliged to you. Nothing shall ever make me consent to it. I only wish

you had spoken before. How long has this been going on? Blind fool that I am!"

"It is only since yesterday that I have thought Beauchamp had any serious purpose of engaging her affections. He has had a great deal of confidential talk with her from the first day when they met at the cricket match; but that is nothing. I have seen him confidential with too many women, married and single, ever to think much of that. I believe I was firmly persuaded that he was not a marrying young gentleman till yesterday; but from his manner then, I believe him to be really in love."

"And Miss Moore?" asked Lord Singleton, shortly, yet with great anxiety.

"That I am sure I cannot tell. She does not seem displeased at his attentions; but a young lady of seventeen—did you not say she was only seventeen?—would be very unlikely to be so. I should not fancy there was much

harm done—I should not suppose she was likely to be easily won.”

“What a blind idiot I have been!” said Lord Singleton, vehemently. “This would indeed be a pretty way of fulfilling her father’s trust in me, to let her become the wife of a selfish, indolent, profligate dandy. I scorn myself at the bare idea of such an event.”

“Come, come, Singleton, you are too hard on Beauchamp.”

“No, I am not. I am not a person to mince matters. I know what I know, and I must say what I think; and I shall do my duty too. Nothing on earth shall ever make me consent to it.”

“What shall you do?” asked his companion. “My best advice to you is, to get cool before you do or say anything.”

“I will. That is good advice. I feel now that I would willingly fling him into the river. I shall not trust to you. I will see whether

you are right with my own eyes before I speak. If I think there is any danger, I shall tell Miss Moore at once that I will not have it."

"Be careful. There is nothing young ladies resent so much as interference in such matters; and though you are her guardian, remember, you are a very young one. She may justly object to your observations on her conduct."

"I will be as discreet as if I were her father," said the young lord, confidently; "I shall turn it all well over in my mind, and do it as I think best. Of course, there will be a row, but I am not the least afraid of that. She has a will of her own, but I like it. I had far rather conquer a strong will like hers than a poor weak one like Horner's."

"Yes, if there is a real, honest victory," said Colonel Herbert. "What I fear is, the driving her to the very thing you wish to avoid."

A man, I suppose, can know very little how sensitive a woman's feeling is in such matters, and, quite involuntarily, he may say the very thing that is most galling."

"I think I have good right to be angry," said Lord Singleton, without heeding his friend's words. "Lowry knows perfectly well how little I approve of him or his ways. He must know, therefore, what pain he gives me by such an attempt."

"You do not allow for the force of fancy," said Colonel Herbert, smiling. "A man in love does not sit down to consider all the objections to his passion ; but, if he thinks of them at all, intends to overcome them."

"Lowry in love !—carried away by passion !—folly and nonsense ! He has no more heart than a bit of stone. If I thought Lowry could be carried away by anything, I should not—I should like him better than I do. But I know him well. I never will consent to this."

“My last advice to you, Singleton—if any difficulty arise from this matter—is, be cool, and don’t be prejudiced.”

“Oh, certainly. I beg your pardon, if I seem to be in a passion. I am not really so. Vexed I am, that I allow—vexed at my own trusting folly; but quite cool—or, at least, I will be so before I speak.”

After parting with his friend, Lord Singleton rode home. During the ride he cooled himself, according to his promise—that is to say, he supposed himself to be doing so, for it is possible his meditations had a contrary effect. On arriving at his house, he heard, with strong indignation, that Mr. Beauchamp was tired of waiting for him, and was gone to luncheon at the Cottage.

Thither, in the heat of the moment, Lord Singleton pursued him. He found the whole party on the lawn, in their walking dresses, as if about to proceed on some business or expe-

dition, and Lowry Beauchamp with them. His good sense now, at last, cooled the impetuosity of his temper, and he joined them without any display of wrath.

Being invited by Mrs. Beauchamp to walk with them, he acquiesced—an unexpected politeness, for which, had he cared to remark it, he might have been rewarded by the sparkling pleasure in Annette's eyes. The very first arrangements disturbed and irritated him, though they were but natural ones. As he placed himself by Mrs. Beauchamp and Annette—and the path did not admit of six—it was to be expected that Lowry Beauchamp would accompany Sybil and Zoé behind. But the sound of their voices, engaged in constant conversation, fretted him almost beyond endurance.

As the objects of his attention were, however, behind him, he could not arrive at any certain decision; and he made but an indif-

ferent companion, while he vainly occupied himself in endeavouring to see without his eyes. The chances of the walk, however, gave him the opportunity he desired. Annette paid a visit of a few minutes to an invalid lady, which visit had been the ostensible object of the walk; and while she and Zoé entered the house, the remaining four stood, or sat, on the heath together. Now, in fact, there was very little to be seen. Lowry Beauchamp was on his guard, and with Sybil's manners there was no fault to be found; but it is seldom that a watcher's eyes do not see that which they look for. To Lowry Beauchamp Lord Singleton paid little attention; from the first moment he had felt no doubt about him; it was on Sybil he intently, yet guardedly, fixed his gaze; and two smiles, a look of attention and interest during some anecdote, and, above all, a slight blush, for which Lord Singleton could not discover a cause,

left him convinced that there was no time to be lost, if he wished to prevent an enormous evil.

The following day was Sunday. After the afternoon service, Mrs. Beauchamp and Annette went to a Sunday-school, and this day, for the first time, Zoé accompanied them. Sybil and Mr. Beauchamp were to walk home together. Lowry Beauchamp was not there.

While Sybil was speaking to Annette in the churchyard, Lord Singleton went up to Mr. Beauchamp, and said—"I want to say a few words to Miss Moore alone, without making any fuss; will you manage it for me, when we get to the Cottage?"

"It is a dangerous request, my dear lord," replied Mr. Beauchamp, laughing; "but I suppose I may trust you?"

"I will follow you," said the young lord, knitting his brows at the poor joke; and left him.

Mr. Beauchamp and Sybil strolled homewards. As they reached the Cottage, Lord

Singleton appeared, and joined them, and all three entered the drawing-room together.

Mr. Beauchamp, without making any comment, passed through the room, and closed the door. Sybil threw on the table some roses she had gathered, and after rapidly placing a few in a flower-glass, was about to follow his example, with the glass in her hand. Lord Singleton, who had been standing at the garden-door, unwilling to alarm her by too hasty a beginning, here turned round, and said, eagerly and decidedly—"Pray don't go, Miss Moore ; I wish much to have a few moments' conversation with you."

Anger and rebellion rushed in a crimson flood to Sybil's brow, and her first impulse was to pass on without a word ; but her disdainful impulses usually controlled her passionate ones, and, after a moment's consideration, she turned back, set down the glass on the table, and haughtily awaited what he had to say.

“Pray be so good as to sit down,” he observed; “I do not wish to speak in haste.”

She obeyed with a kind of defiant obedience, and he seated himself opposite to her.

“What I have to say,” he began, leaning forward, and regarding her with earnestness, “requires some explanation. You may perhaps think that I am not justified in saying it, and, therefore, I will tell you beforehand my motives for doing it. I should not feel it my duty to leave you in ignorance of my sentiments in any matter of importance, and though I might let you know them by other means—I might convey them to you by Mr. or Mrs. Beauchamp, for instance—yet, upon the whole, I thought a personal communication the best and pleasantest for you. There are some things about which the old proverb, ‘the least said, the soonest mended,’ is particularly true, and about which, I myself, if the case were mine, should much dislike a fuss.”

“It is a matter of total indifference to me,” Sybil said, chillingly. “I am ready to hear what you have to say, either from yourself or Mrs. Beauchamp, as you please.”

He was hurt by her manner. He had, in fact, after the first heat was over, pondered much on the best way of proceeding, and though certainly mistaken, had decided on a personal interview, to save her the annoyance of being watched and suspected by the Beauchamps. He thought he deserved greater kindness, and his temper of mind was not calmed in consequence.

A pause ensued. It is difficult to converse with rigid iron. Lord Singleton felt uncomfortable and unlike himself, and was much inclined to pass his fingers through his hair, as Mr. Horner did in his perplexities. This did not last, however; it was a momentary involuntary submission to Sybil's pride, and as soon as he recollected himself and his position,

it was overcome. He then plunged headlong into his difficulties.

“I have been trying to form my words into polite phrases, Miss Moore,” he began, with a slight smile, “but it will not do; and, after all, it is no matter. With a sensible person the plain truth is the best, so do not be offended at hearing the plain downright truth from me. I have been very much pained at seeing my cousin, Lowry Beauchamp’s attentions to you. He is not a person of whom I, acting for your father, could possibly approve for your husband, and so I think it best to tell you, before, I hope, your affections are in the least engaged, that nothing on earth should ever induce me to consent to such a marriage.”

Sybil struggled to be cold and calm, but in vain. Her cheek was dyed, her eyes were flashing with passion. “Lord Singleton,” she exclaimed, “you strangely forget yourself. Do you dare to say such things to me?”

“Yes, I do dare,” he replied, almost as passionately as herself, “and I shall dare much more for the sake of your happiness and welfare. I know my cousin well, and I know that he is not a person long to command the respect and love of a character like yours ; you would be plunging into certain misery if you encouraged him, and so I tell you plainly that nothing on earth—”

He was interrupted by her sudden rising. “Lord Singleton,” she said, endeavouring to express herself with calmness, “you have no right to speak to me in such a way, and I shall certainly not give you the right you cannot otherwise have”—and too hastily to be arrested, and heeding not his eager “Miss Moore, one moment, I entreat you,” she left the room, and left him discomfited.

But if he were discomfited, she in reality was no less so. Her pride swelled at the insult she had received, rebelled at the authority he

assumed ; and the thought of her desolate orphan state which left her with none to whom she could fly for refuge against his tyranny, drew tears of passion and bitterness from her eyes. Thought and solitude only added to her indignation, and in the tumult of her agitated and irritated emotions, anxious to escape all notice and intrusion, she softly stole down stairs, and made her escape by a back door into a wood that skirted the Park. This wood was, from its loneliness and shade, a favourite resort, when at any time she wished to indulge in solitude and reflection.

Lord Singleton, meanwhile, had never been so baffled before. He knit his brows and even stamped his foot in impatience, but this temper was speedily followed by a profounder vexation. He dreaded lest by his mismanagement she should have been driven to the very state of mind from which he most desired to withhold her ; and the young lord's

pride and passion were conquered by his cares for his ward's welfare.

He stood for a few minutes leaning out of the window, while he pondered on what step to take, and then rapidly crossing the room, sat down to write.

His letter was this :—

“ DEAR MISS MOORE,

“ If by my too plain speaking I have offended you, I most earnestly beg you to forgive me. Be assured, though my manner of speech may be hasty and inconsiderate, that my meaning is good, and prompted by the truest wish for your happiness. The opinion I expressed I am forced to repeat. I cannot consistently with my duty say otherwise. Do not, because I offend you, refuse to take my warning. It was, perhaps, to be wished, since my cares for your welfare are displeasing to you, that the duty I speak of had never been imposed upon me ; but what is done is done,

and wishes are useless. You have more than once disputed my right to advise you. Will you read the two letters I enclose? I brought them for the very purpose of showing you how impossible it is for me to act otherwise than I have done. Be wise and candid, and like yourself, and acknowledge this. I have only to say in conclusion, that I am sorry to have pained you. I knew I should do it, but I ventured that, and would venture much more, to save you from unhappiness and to fulfil the trust your father reposed in me. Be so good as to return me the letters.

“Your very sincere friend,

“SINGLETON.”

He had directed his letter, and was sealing it, when Annette entered.

“You see, Annette,” he said, quickly, “that I have taken the liberty to write here. This is a letter to Miss Moore. I have offended her by speaking my mind too freely, no matter

on what subject; but I am truly sorry to give offence, and so I have written to explain myself better than I did by words. Will you be so kind as to take the letter to her room and give it to her?"

Annette took it without any questionings, and finding Sybil absent, laid it on her table and returned.

"Miss Moore is not there," she said; "but I have left the letter. Is that right?"

"Not there!" Lord Singleton replied, looking much annoyed. "What has she done with herself?"

"She often walks alone — you need not trouble yourself about that—almost always on a Sunday evening, when it is fine."

Lord Singleton said nothing, but the look of annoyance did not vanish.

"Are you vexed, Lord Singleton?" Annette asked, anxiously.

"Yes, I am," he replied, vehemently.

“She has caused me nothing but vexation from the first moment she came, and I wish I had never had anything to do with her.”

“Don’t wish that,” Annette said, with earnestness. “You have done her a great deal of good.”

“Have I, Annette?” he said, only too ready to be soothed and consoled. “What good have I done?”

“She is so *really* good now. At first, her ideas of goodness were more like theories than reality ; but now she is really good. She may be mistaken sometimes — that is, like most people she may have faults ; but she is so anxious to do right.”

“Ah ! Annette,” said the young lord, with a moment’s humility, “if it be so, it is you she has to thank, not me.”

“Many things here have been useful,” Annette said, earnestly ; “she says so herself ; but it all comes to the same in the end—for

who brought her here? I don't mean to be a flatterer, but, now you are distressed, I cannot help saying what I think."

"Thank you. Well, I am glad, at any rate, that good is done," he replied, receiving the flattering unction into his soul; "and, since you say it is so, I will try and not be vexed, as I now am, I own. I must do my duty, and only hope the consequences will not be bad. Take care she has the letter as soon as she comes in; and you can just add, Annette, that, though I said nothing of what had passed, I begged you to tell her how sincerely sorry I was to have been obliged to give her pain."

It would have been a great comfort to him to confide his troubles to so kind a consoler as Annette, but his sense of honour was too high to permit such a relief; and he went home to increase his perturbations in solitude.

Sybil's lonely walk, the object of which had been to cool and compose herself, was

attended with the same effects as Lord Singleton's cooling ride the day before. The more she reflected, the more glaring seemed the insult she had received. The humiliation of being thus addressed—the humiliation of being supposed to need such an address—it was not pride and passion only, but that which is called 'a woman's delicacy' which rose up in arms. It would have been better if she had taken 'a woman's delicacy' as a counsellor in this emergency; but the counsellor she did choose was that passionate pride which cannot fail to mislead and betray.—The unsafest of all.

Her conscience did not own that she had given any provocation to the insult. In this point her conscience was partly mistaken—for her sufferance of attentions which she perceived was certainly encouragement—but her mind was not clear enough for conscience to speak; she said she had not needed the warning, and then, with the singular inconsistency

of the human heart, determined that needed it should be. She would do that which her guardian advised her not to do ; she defied him to control her, and would by her actions prove her independence.

This was the resolution which, after a cooling—or, rather, heating—walk of an hour or more, rose to the surface of her mind. It was not calmly made—but it seized her, and she yielded to it.

In returning to the Cottage, she met Lowry Beauchamp. He had missed her in calling there, and had been wandering about in the hope of some such opportunity as this. For his views he could not have found her at a better moment.

He approached her with some indifferent remark on his lips, but his quick eyes immediately perceived that something was the matter.

“Has anything annoyed you?” he asked ;
“you do not look like yourself!”

“Nothing,” she replied, quickly—“that is, nothing of importance.”

“You were right,” he said, with a smile, “to add that latter clause, or you would have forfeited the high character for truth you hold in my eyes ; your face cannot deceive.”

“I am sorry,” she said, colouring ; “for though I do not wish to deceive, neither do I wish to be seen through.”

“It is the penalty strong characters must pay, that is, strong characters whose countenances have the charm of being mirrors to their minds. I can conceive,” he added, expressively, “no greater penance than to be the object of your scorn. It would be withering.”

“Yes, I *can* scorn,” she said, drawing up her slight figure, and a defiant spirit flushing her cheek and darting from her eyes.

She looked strangely beautiful in her passion ; yet it was not an expression which

would have attracted a clear and good mind. Lowry Beauchamp, however, watched her kindling countenance with intense admiration. Her scorn was not for him, that was plain, and he seized the moment to say some meaning words.

“If you can scorn, you can also give happiness. If it were a penance to be the object of the one, what will they feel who receive from you the other!”

His voice was low and even agitated. Sybil's heart beat, certainly with no responsive feeling, if real feeling was in question, but with flattered vanity, with the natural shyness of the moment, and most and chiefest of all with the sweet sense of triumph over her guardian. Under these varied sensations, her head grew dizzy, and her judgment became clouded, and, with a blushing cheek and unrepelling eye, she accepted his words.

Lowry Beauchamp saw his advantage. It

was beyond his hopes. He became excited (that is for *him*, who, perhaps, wisely enough, never permitted any excitement to lead him where he was not willing to go), and was about, under the strengthening influence of the moment's fever, to make a nearer and a bolder venture, when, as they turned a corner and came in sight of the Cottage, he perceived Annette and Zoé hastening towards them.

Upon the whole he was not sorry. He was not so positively certain he read her rightly as to make his venture a fearless one. He was not on the whole sorry to be allowed another opportunity for examination; but though his judgment was not angry at the interruption, his feelings were, and he cried impatiently and regretfully—

“Miss Beauchamp! I really cannot talk to her to-night. We do not, certainly, need moralists to tell us that pleasures are tran-

sitory. I will leave you. Good-night." And he held out his hand.

Though he had no time for words, his looks spoke eloquently ; and when Sybil gave her frank and ready hand in return, she gave him almost all he desired of certainty and encouragement. But she was in no sane mood of mind. Little thought was she giving to him, could he but know it. All her thought was of the glad pleasure of rebelling against her guardian.

"Good-night," she blushing and courteously replied to his good-night, and with rapid footsteps hastened homewards.

CHAPTER XII.

“ ‘ I will resist,’ he said, impelled by pride ;
‘ I must submit,’ recurring fear replied ;
As wheels the vane when winds around it play,
So his strong passions turned him every way.”

CRABBE.

ANNETTE followed Sybil to her room, and delivering the letter and the message, she added — “ I don’t know what it is about, though, perhaps, I do guess ; but I am sure Lord Singleton speaks only the truth, when he says how sorry he is to have given you pain. I never saw any one more vexed and annoyed.”

Sybil was taking off her bonnet, and she made no reply.

Annette left the room.

Sybil looked at the letter, thick with its enclosures, and seemed little disposed to read the lecture she supposed it contained. Twice she threw it aside ; but she was in a restless, uncomfortable state of mind, and the very desire to be doing something made her turn to it at last. Her father's letters, which she first seized, and read with eagerness, touched her. His strong expressions regarding her moral welfare—and these dedicated from his death-bed—not only affected, but troubled her. Two or three large tears fell from her eyes, and in falling, like the large drops of a thunder-shower, cleared the atmosphere of her mind. She began to recover her sanity. From these letters, which she was forced to own gave Lord Singleton larger powers than she had anticipated, she turned to his, and the

frank, kind tone, even against her will, softened her. She could not excuse his insolence ; but she felt less indignant and revengeful now it was passed. She leaned her head on her hand, and began to think ; and it was while thus in thought, that, like a flash of lightning, what had passed with Lowry Beauchamp returned to her mind, and assumed its true colours there. It is no exaggeration to say, that the thought was like a serpent's sting.

Reality is the only thing that affects the mind : words and pictures are nothing unless they have truth in them. More than once that day, the idea of Lowry Beauchamp as a lover—even the idea of marriage with Lowry Beauchamp—had been presented to her mind, and she had not turned from it—it had made no impression ; but now that she had, by her own conduct, brought it within the verge of possibility—nay, of probability—it affected her far otherwise. It was a new madness

that came over her ; but, this time, a frenzy of dread and remorse. Too candid and right-minded not to acknowledge what she had done, she saw before her nothing but misery or humiliation — misery, if she advanced a step—humiliation, in her own eyes, at least, if she drew back.

During the evening, she, with effort, controlled her emotions ; but the night she passed was such as they pass, who, with conscientious, yet undisciplined minds, have—through their own headstrong passions—brought themselves to a brink of misery.

Lord Singleton's evening was not much more calm. His first duty had been to Sybil ; but he was not a person to say a word against any man in concealment, and he had now to inform his cousin what he had done. It was a less agreeable duty than the first. There had been excitement in making known to Sybil his will ; but, to tell a man to his face

that you have been abusing him behind his back, is a cold matter-of-fact business, which has not much excitement to support it. Lord Singleton had not intended to speak that evening, but his mind was so unsettled by what had passed, and so restless with fears of what might occur, that it was a relief to him to occupy himself further.

When the servants, therefore, left the room, and he and his cousin sat alone at dessert, he rose up, threw the window wide open, cooled himself with a breath of fresh air, poured out a glass of wine, and then began ;—

“ I don’t like to speak against a man, without telling him of it, Lowry, and so I have a confession to make to you.”

Lowry Beauchamp was not slow to guess the purport of his confession, and a momentary colour in his face showed he did ;—he only answered, however, sarcastically, “ Your confession, I suppose, will be a lengthy one, em-

bracing all the days of your life. Abuse from you is no novel thing. I am glad you have given me warning. I shall put myself at my ease to hear it." And he threw up his legs on a chair.

"That is not fair," Lord Singleton said, indignantly. "Whatever I may think, I do not often say what I think. I did, yesterday, to Herbert, but that is not to the purpose. I was not speaking of expressions of disapproval;—what I have to confess, is having, in some respects, acted unfairly by you, for I have done what I can to prevent your gaining what I suppose you wish to have."

"And by what right," asked his cousin, with some heat.

"By the right of a guardian. Let me tell you plainly what I have done. I suppose you to be endeavouring to gain Miss Moore's affections—I have warned her, this day, against you, and told her, without any concealment,

that nothing on earth shall induce me to consent to such a marriage."

Whatever Lowry Beauchamp felt, he swallowed his wrath, and preserved his cool, sarcastic tone. "I hope your efforts were satisfactorily received. It may perhaps just be remarked, that you were a little premature in your interference."

"Premature, yes, in the hope of sparing pain. You cannot deny, Lowry, that I am right in my supposition."

"Whether I do or not, is nothing to the purpose. Perhaps you are right, perhaps wrong. Since you have taken on yourself to be a spy, pray continue to hold that estimable office. I shall not forbid you. You have done what you think right. I shall do what I think right. You have given me warning ; I give you warning."

"If I could make you understand my duty as a guardian, I should not care that

you thought me a harsh one, or that you called me names. What is called harsh and unjust, is very often very right. I have undertaken to watch over her welfare, and I think it very much against her welfare to be married to you, and I will do my duty at the cost of being unfair, though you are my cousin."

"A costly sacrifice, truly. I feel for you. But let me assure you that I do perfectly understand your duty as a guardian. A young lady, rich and beautiful, has dropped into your fortunate hands, and as a rich and handsome guardian should, he means to unite perfections."

"Rich!" said Lord Singleton, with ineffable scorn."

"Well, yes, rich."

"What has riches to do with a woman's perfections?"

"In some cases a good deal. In all cases they add to them. For, myself, I openly confess I shall never think of a woman without them."

“Well, Lowry, I beg your pardon; of course I cannot expect you to feel quite as I do on that point; but lest you ever again should suspect me of being such a sordid soul as to wish by any means to gain possession of my ward’s wealth, I may as well tell you at once, that her wealth is a very poor concern. A matter of six or seven hundred a year, no more.”

Lord Singleton spoke in the heat of the moment to exonerate himself of sordid motives, not to impress his cousin, but as he spoke, looking full in Lowry Beauchamp’s face, he saw his countenance change. It *fell*. A something of elation and self satisfaction fell from it. The change arrested his attention. He saw, understood, and scorned it.

What he saw was not the fancy of his brain. Lowry Beauchamp had certainly not anticipated so lame and impotent a conclusion to his visions regarding Sybil. When he considered the point, he perceived that he had been carried away by his imagination, for he

could show no certain ground for his suppositions that she was a real heiress. The rebuff Lord Singleton had given him on one occasion, when he threw out an inquiry regarding her position, was the only *fact* he could point to, to excuse himself in his own eyes,—for excuse he needed. He certainly cared for Sybil in a degree, she had caught his fancy, but he was not a man to yield to a fancy without good strong reasons. Such he had imagined he had in this case. Finding himself mistaken his dream, whatever his regret, was over. He was totally incapable of wishing to undertake the impossible task of uniting luxurious and self-indulgent habits to small means and family cares.

The shock of his cousin's words was severe, but he commanded himself. The change in his countenance was involuntary, his answer was quite cool.

“A sum which is small or great, according to the taste or habits of the possessor.”

“Of course, a large sum to many, but not a sum to tempt either you or me. I am rich, and thankful to be so, for though, perhaps, I ought to be ashamed of it, I confess I don’t know what I should do if I were poor; and you, Lowry, I am sure so far agree with me, that a house and household on a thousand or fifteen hundred a year, or whatever the exact sum might be, would be purgatory to you.”

“You are right speaking generally, but there are circumstances which may change purgatory into another place.”

There was a touch of feeling in his tone; partly assumed, but partly natural also, for Sybil had not lost her charm in his eyes. That touch of nature caught and affected Lord Singleton, whose ears were singularly acute to the discovery of truth of feeling.

With a manner altogether different to any in which he had yet spoken, he now exclaimed—

“My dear Lowry are you really attached to Miss Moore. I am inexpressibly sorry if you are.”

“Have you been lecturing me under the supposition that I am a hypocrite,” said his cousin, coldly.

“A hypocrite, no, but I did not expect to find real feeling. I am more sorry than I can say to give you pain. But it is a matter in which I have no choice; you *must*, — now confess it, you *do* understand and do justice to my motives.”

“I do perfectly. You have a prize, I will not say a wealthy one, but a precious one, in your hands and you wish to reserve it for yourself.”

“How dare you!” cried Lord Singleton, angrily. “Now, Lowry, listen to me—put yourself as well as you can in my place. I may be wrong or I may be right in my judgment of you, but it is no novelty to you—you say that yourself—that I do not approve of

your ways—I do not like your principles, neither your moral nor religious ones. I think them low and dangerous. Thinking and being in the habit I hope of acting conscientiously, can you blame me that I do my best to guard from you, one over whose welfare I have promised to watch, and whom I am certain you could not render happy.”

“I neither blame nor otherwise. Every man has a right to act as he pleases. You being all-powerful, can in all points please yourself.”

“I am very sorry I have given you pain, Lowry. I wish you could assure me that the pain will not be great.”

“Thank you for your solicitude. Whatever the pain may be, I assure you that now I know your intentions with regard to Miss Moore, I will not enter the lists against you.”

“Take care how you provoke me,” Lord Singleton cried, passionately. “I beg your

pardon, Lowry," cooling himself, "but do you know you try me almost beyond endurance? If you were to breathe such an idea as that in Miss Moore's hearing, you would do a mischief that could not be mended. What trust—what confidence could she repose in me, if she supposed her guardian to be influenced by selfish passion? It makes me mad to think of it!"

"You may depend on my secrecy," replied his cousin, provoking to the last. "It would indeed be too bad of me to rob your declarations of their freshness, by a premature disclosure."

The young lord's temper was getting beyond his control. He pushed the bottles and glasses from before him, and rose up, keeping silence with a violence upon himself which drew blood from his bitten lips. When he obtained the victory, it was more from a sense of his position as master of the house,

than from any higher restraint upon his passion.

“Come, Lowry,” he said, “don’t let us quarrel. I would be good friends with you if I could; and if I have been obliged to speak my mind freely, I am sincerely sorry. If it pleases you to know it, you have tormented me enough, and let that be your revenge; and now let us be at peace.”

“With all my heart,” said Lowry, smiling; “so far, at least, as *rivals* can be.”

Having, by one consideration or another, been baffled in essentials, it was not, perhaps, unnatural that Lowry Beauchamp chose to use the weapon for punishment which he found to be effectual; but its irritating effect on Lord Singleton was such, that had he not possessed considerable self-control, and also been blessed with a temper which, fiery as it was, had no *rancune* in it, the consequences might have been serious.

Having, however, that happy thing, a sweet temper, he was—so soon as he had mastered his annoyance—planning means to amuse his guest during the evening; and, for this purpose, routed out from some damp chamber a portfolio of old drawings, which he supposed might interest his cousin's tastes.

Lowry Beauchamp had not the least wish to quarrel with Lord Singleton. He therefore accepted the proffered attention, and the evening closed in harmony.

The young lord, when he rose the next morning, would have been thankful to know what step would be taken by his cousin, to put an end to his present position regarding Miss Moore, but he received no information. After breakfast they parted, as usual; and when Lord Singleton returned from a hurried visit to Mr. Horner, Lowry Beauchamp was nowhere to be seen. He was standing in the court-yard, pondering on by no means pleasant

reflections, when Mr. Beauchamp's errand boy appeared with a letter in his hand; being loudly called for by Lord Singleton, he delivered it to him. With quick haste and eager curiosity he tore open the envelope, but Captain Moore's two letters were the sole contents. No word from Sybil, either of acknowledgement or defiance. He was forced to remain, bursting in ignorance, for he would not for worlds have gone near the Cottage, lest he should seem to be—what Lowry Beauchamp had called him—a spy upon her actions.

Sybil's restless night was followed by a restless morning. Her self-confidence, for the time being, was gone, and she thought with dread of what the day might bring forth. Her eyes now saw clearly, that, in the madness of pride, she might have been capable of plighting her faith to Lowry Beauchamp, and what has been, may, in a like mood, return again. She distrusted herself. Even, how-

ever, if no fear of such a result existed, her way was difficult, as backward paths must always be. It was difficult and humiliating in itself, and the strength of her fearful fancy made it seem more difficult still.

In the course of the morning, she returned to wander in her favourite resort. She went thither partly in the hope of solitude, and partly in the hope that her solitude might be broken. Such double wishes are no uncommon features in the restless and anxious mind. She dreaded the meeting that sooner or later must come, and yet longed that it should come, that the spectre aroused by her fearful fancy might be laid to rest.' Sybil's temperament was very excitable, and the excitable, in their excitements, are scarcely sane. While she wandered and waited, she worked herself into a fever of uneasiness and dread. Her perplexities were ended in a way which certainly she neither anticipated nor desired.

After an hour of wandering alone, Lowry Beauchamp came according to her expectation and wish. As she saw him approach, she endeavoured to put on a free and stately air. She endeavoured, by her manner, to deny what her manner, the day before, had confessed. But in vain. Supported by self-confidence and pride, none could better assume a queenly air ; but her self-confidence had fallen from her—she was humbled in her own eyes, and her nature was too frank and ingenuous to conceal it. In vain the stately head and unslackened pace—she blushed as she met him, and embarrassment was written on every feature and every limb.

If her situation was embarrassing, Lowry Beauchamp's was much more so. He had to extricate himself from a position in which he no longer desired to stand ; and this he wished to do without appearing to submit to Lord Singleton's authority, and without coming to

any explanation with Sybil. The former, his pride forbade—the latter, his selfishness. He did not wish to find that her feelings were favourable towards him. His vanity very justly assumed they were, but he wished to avoid conviction. A scene would have been exceedingly repugnant to him, and this for obvious reasons; for, having fully made up his mind that poverty, or what he considered poverty, was a state of life he could not endure, the knowledge of Sybil's attachment could only be burdensome.

The escape he planned was like himself—selfish; self-love only was considered, and a mind was shown in which the first principle of a gentleman—that of giving ‘honour to the weaker sex’—was wanting.

If inwardly embarrassed, however, he showed no signs of embarrassment in the outer man; neither did he betray any consciousness of the very visible embarrassment in Sybil's manner. He met her with an open

and fearless ease, from which every recollection of the preceding evening seemed to be swept away, and which, while it assumed a familiar intimacy, assumed also the existence of a perfect understanding between them, that so and so only it was to be.

Such things are usually overdone. His manner, in Sybil's estimation, was insolent : contrasted with the fever of fear regarding him which had excited her mind, it was humiliating. In one moment, all feelings of contrition—all feelings of regret at her conduct—all feelings of remorse at having misled him—were as entirely forgotten, as if they had never existed ; and pride again rose up the sole governor of her behaviour.

With a manner as easy and unembarrassed, and she supposed as cool as his own, she entered into the discourse with which he accosted her.

“ You are fond of solitude, Miss Moore,” he

observed, as he walked by her side, after some indifferent conversation on the sun and the shade. "I have often remarked this since I have been here."

"They are very poor creatures who do not sometimes like to be alone," Sybil said, carelessly; "but I don't like solitude in opposition to society. I like both."

"A very necessary explanation," he replied, laughing. "Our fellow creatures in general have no power of conceiving two principles in the mind. Most people on hearing that Miss Moore liked solitude would set her down as having the spirit of a hermit. To me it was not necessary. I know human nature too well not to be convinced that they are 'to one thing constant never.'"

"And they are best inconstant," Sybil said, hastily, an irritation she could not suppress—an irritation his coolness of manner caused her giving bitterness to her tongue; "for to be

constant would, for the most part, be to be invariably bad."

"You are very severe on human nature—more severe than even I, with all the satirical propensities for which I am reprov'd, should have the heart to be."

"I was wrong to speak of human nature," she replied, in the same bitter tone; "human nature is not a class: men differ one from the other as much as plants or animals do."

"And to some men you would give the permission to be constant?"

"I suppose," she said, more mildly and indifferently, feeling a sudden consciousness that her hasty speeches were not as dignified as might be, "one likes constancy where a thing is worth constancy, not without."

"Had I time or inclination," Lowry Beauchamp said, after a moment, his manner assuming, in a slight degree, a less easy tone, "I should ask permission to sound the depth

of your thoughts, and discover to what characters you would apply Shakspeare's words, 'Were he constant, he were perfect.' But another question is now uppermost in my mind. How is it that you, so formed to observe, to discriminate, to admire, and appreciate the best of what society can give, can be contented *here*—in this by nature, I grant it, rich, but, intellectually, poverty-stricken land?"

"There are better things than intellect," Sybil said, hastily.

"I doubt it," he said, with a smile.

"I mean," she replied, again composing her irritated mind, "that I have found goodness and attachment, and with that in my desolate lot I am and should be content."

"*You* may be content, but your friends cannot be content for you. I must wish you better things. Shall you be with the Berkeleys again?"

“I hope so—some day.”

“There with them, perhaps, I shall meet you again.”

“Perhaps,” she said, with frigid carelessness.

“Miss Moore,” he said, suddenly, after a moment’s pause, “do you ever feel tempted to curse your fate?”

“I trust not,” she replied, with dignity.

“No,” he continued, with some real agitation; “why should I ask you, rich in gifts as you are, so strange a question. But there are those—Why is it that to me desires for happiness have been given, large, insatiable, and yet the worldly means of gratifying them have been withheld? I have often been tempted to curse my fate, but never so much as now.”

The drift of his meaning was plain through his vague phraseology.

“And why, now?” was a question on

Sybil's proud, indignant lips, but her better woman's nature withheld her. She would for ever have scorned herself, had she endeavoured to draw from him what he was unwilling to utter. She only said, with eyes that flashed, but a tongue that was cold, "I thought fate was not to be cursed, but conquered."

"Where conquest is possible, yes," he replied, a slight glow on his cheek. "Where it is not so, and since cursing is forbidden, a hard submission remains. I sought you this morning—feeling I dared no longer linger here—to bid you farewell; and what must be done, had best be done quickly. May every happiness attend you."

He held out his hand, and cold and calm she gave her own; but when he made a movement, as if he would have raised it to his lips, she withdrew it haughtily. He did not appear to perceive her indignation, and departed.

He departed, as Sybil was well assured,

feeling that he might have won her, had he desired it. She felt humbled in the dust, yet, from that humiliation, nothing but pride sprang up. Not towards *him*, however, did the bitterness of her anger turn ; in her eyes he was not worth a thought. Her indignation was for him, whose unjustifiable interference had disordered her mind, and driven her into circumstances of difficulty and temptation.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ At first thou gav’st me milk and sweetnesses,
I had my wish and way,
My path was strewed with flowers and happiness,
There was no month but May.
But with my years sorrow did twist and grow,
And made a party unawares for woe.”

GEORGE HERBERT.

HOWEVER domineering Lord Singleton might be in the exercise of his authority, no one could be fuller than he was of kind thoughts and tact, (which is also kindness) in his dealings with others. Feeling that it might be painful to Miss Moore, to meet him again immediately after his cousin’s departure, he ac-

accompanied Lowry Beauchamp to London, and there remained for ten days, a prey to irritation, and an *ennui* that could scarcely be controlled.

As soon as the ten days' absence he had imposed upon himself was over, he returned unexpectedly, called at Mr. Beauchamp's house at nine o'clock at night, on his way to his own, shook hands with every body, reported some trifling news as an apology for his sudden visit, and almost immediately took his leave again.

The meeting which he had dreaded and he thought she must dread, was thus far over, and being over, he thought of the affair in any disagreeable light no more.

All things returned to their usual course. The intercourse between the guardian and his ward was perhaps more distant than before; but as he made no advances, and attempted nothing beyond a kind and respectful greeting

when they met and when they parted, there was no opportunity for exhibitions of pride or coldness on Sybil's part.

Offended pride was, however, rankling bitterly within her. Her candid nature had meditated very profitably on the humiliation she had received. She looked on her conduct in its true colours; made sage reflections on pride and vanity, passion and excitement, wilfulness and obstinacy, and very resolutely determined to be misled by them no more; and her resolutions were as sincere as they were determined, yet, nevertheless, she treasured in her heart the while, feelings against Lord Singleton, which could not fail again to betray her. Looking on him in the light of an enemy to her peace, she cherished sentiments of proud defiance and rankling revenge; and though the even tenor of her life laid them for a time to sleep, it was a slumber that at any moment might be broken.

Lord Singleton, meanwhile, having put away all the disagreeable effects of the late events, indulged in some elation of self-satisfaction on the success attending his efforts. The state of his general tone of mind during the latter part of this year, may best be seen from the following letter to Mr. Temple :—

“ Beauchamp Park,

October 26th.

“ MY DEAR MR. TEMPLE,

“ I beg you not to apologize for your letter of inquiries. Besides that I am extremely glad to hear from you at all, I am also glad to find that you are still interested in our concerns. I should have answered your letter last week, but that I was in the very midst of my year's accounts, and had not time for a good letter.

“ We are going on in the most satisfactory manner in every way ; everything seems to prosper. I hope it is not vanity to feel that

a blessing attends all I do. I don't know why it should be vanity ; I think we are told that people who do their duty shall be blessed, and I am sure I try to do mine with all my heart. Whether it is vanity or not, such is the case ; everything goes well, sometimes there are difficulties, but they are hardly seen before they are gone, and I rather like to meet them, for the pleasure of conquering them.

“ The church is getting on famously ; but it will not be finished till next year. Building is very expensive, every day some new want starts up, notwithstanding that, I will not hear of any excesses, but keep to my first simple plan. The people are all watching the building with interest, and I believe it is a real pleasure to the workmen to work at it. The thing, however, that pleases me most, is the school on the heath. That has been a real benefit to the property, even in one year. We had a slight disturbance last winter ; the poor

ragged rascals refused to have prayers, put up to it, I suppose, by their wretched parents ; but a little decision conquered this difficulty, and ever since we have gone on without a drawback. I am told that the children, having learnt to be orderly and respectful, teach their parents some of the same spirit. With the girls it is still more apparent than the boys. I hear they refuse to come to school dirty and in rags, and this makes their mothers exert themselves. Old Dawson tells me neatness is the best sign in a woman. She tells me her mother used to say—‘Cleanliness, next to godliness,’ so I hope neatness will lead us to greater good in time. There is a good deal of vice and poverty, I fear, at Rotherham ; but I look to the church and resident clergyman for improvement there.

“Horner and I get on extremely well. I dare say I was hasty in appointing him ; but, except on one or two occasions, I have never

repented of my choice. He is a very good man, and does us all good with his preaching. Every now and then he takes upon himself to have opinions which he really is utterly incompetent to have, and then there comes a row. But he soon sees his fault, and draws back; and if he consulted me, as I have often begged him to do, we should have no rows at all. He has not yet found his ogress wife. I wish he would. Sometimes I fancy he has a very foolish thought in his head.

“All the Beauchamps are well. Annette is as good and kind as ever. Miss Moore is still with them. One of the best pieces of work that ever was done, was putting her to
* live there. She loves them, and they love her, and I think it has added to the happiness of all parties. It has been, I am sure, a real advantage to Miss Moore. Annette tells me I have done her good. In some ways, perhaps, I have; but Annette herself is the per-

son who has really softened and improve her. I knew she would beforehand. I was certain Annette was the kind of person to influence a young girl. You once told me to be very careful, or I should have difficulties with my ward. I have, and more than you would suppose ; but, the longer I live, the more I am convinced that if one boldly does what is right, it will all turn to good in the end. I had a good deal of vexation a month or two ago, but I held to my maxim, and it has all turned out better, a thousand times, than I expected.

“ I have given you a very bright picture of our goings on. You must not, however, suppose we are quite in Elysium. I see some troubles arising. I am afraid we shall have hard times to live through, this coming winter. The wheat was a very light crop all over England, and the price of bread, even already, is high. I am told it will be famine price, or nearly so, before the spring. In our neighbour-

hood, also, the potato crop was an entire failure; and that has always been, as you know, a favourite article of food among us. Poverty brings discontent, and Rotherham is not a promising place for discontent to lodge in. However, I am not much afraid. I have already chalked out all my plans. I will do what I can to help my people, and if money comes short, I shall sell my hunters, and give up hunting for this winter. I don't expect this will be necessary, but Solomon was quite right in saying 'riches have wings;' rich as I ought to be, I sometimes find myself very hard up. Whatever comes, I can depend on the attachment of the people, and that is the great thing.

“I forgot to answer your question as to whether I am not thinking of matrimony. Not the least in the world. I am perfectly happy as I am, and I think a wife would be a great plague. I am very glad you have got a

niece with you. In illness, I should suppose a woman *is* a comfort. You must positively come to England for next summer; and remember, after your brother, the first claim upon you is from me.

“I am,

“Yours very faithfully,

“SINGLETON.”

Mr. Temple, who was in the south of France, answered this letter immediately, to request a drawing of the new church. He took the opportunity to say—“You are, no doubt, right, my dear lord, in supposing that a blessing attends those who do their duty; but as doing our duty is often only the following out our own natural inclinations, we must not always look on success and prosperity as rewards. Sometimes, I assure you, they are trials—and very severe ones—of our humility. *Be not high-minded, but fear.* You will excuse me for making this observation; I should

not do it, if I did not perceive a danger in the success that attends you. Go on to do your duty, but do not suffer your heart to be lifted up, and above all, do not trust overmuch to your own efforts. You have often desired me to speak plainly. I do so now."

The young lord procured a ground plan of the new church from Annette, and through Annette a pretty sketch of its bodily appearance from Sybil. He dispatched these to Mr. Temple, with this short letter—

"MY DEAR MR. TEMPLE,

"I send the plan. A thousand thanks to you for blowing me up. I know I want it.

"Yours faithfully,

"SINGLETON."

The prophecies of coming troubles with which Lord Singleton closed his letter, were more than realized. Distress was very prevalent at the close of the year, and,

as is generally the case with those who are accustomed to attention and care, the distress was much felt, and discontent or despondency was the consequence. Lord Singleton did all he could. He raised for the time being, the rate of wages to meet the pressure of high prices ; he entered on two or three new works to employ a larger number of hands, and in every district he established a soup kitchen to relieve the pressing wants of the poorest. Before the winter was far advanced, he was as good as his word, and sold his hunters.

“ Have you really given up hunting,” Annette said to him with a glow of admiration on her cheek, when the fact was mentioned before her ; for Lord Singleton was a ‘mighty hunter.’

“ Yes ; why do you look so surprised ? Did you think I was incapable of making any sacrifice ?—that was a poor thought.”

“ Oh ! no, indeed ; but I am sorry ; I am

very glad you did it, but I am sorry that you should have had to do it."

"Lord Singleton knows," observed her mother, "that the pleasure of benevolence is enhanced by a sacrifice."

"Very true, Mrs. Beauchamp; and yet I confess it has been a bitter pill to me. Poor Loadstar! She went off this morning. I have sold her to Herbert, for I could not make up my mind to let anybody in this county have her. I nearly shed a tear when I sent her off to-day, and Dick, I believe, really wept."

"But then, was it necessary?" asked Annette, pitifully. "Why not keep *one*?"

"You cannot eat your cake, and have it, Annette," said Mrs. Beauchamp, in her dry way.

"It was not quite that, Mrs. Beauchamp," said Lord Singleton. "I am not so hard up, but that I could have kept Loadstar if I had

pleased, but I hear those thankless democrats, at Rotherham have been grumbling about it. Willis told me—and though I think I have as good a right to my hunters, as they have to their pipes, it's as well to be on the safe side in troublous times. Now, I don't know what they can exclaim against, for I am sure my clothes are very modest, and so is my living."

"Yes," Annette said, laughing. "I like your dress, but there is certainly nothing *recherché* in it."

"Except, perhaps, my pocket-handkerchiefs, I am afraid I have always had a taste for fine cambric. Just now, while I was talking to Macbride, I blew my nose, and either my conscience suggested it, or else his wicked eyes were counting up the cost of the cambric all the while. I have never done anything but for the good of these fellows, and yet I believe they hate me from the bottom of their hearts, and all because I was fortunately, or unfortunately, born a lord."

The discontent and grumbling was not confined to Rotherham. A bad spirit soon spreads, especially when the pressure of poverty gives just, or apparently just, grounds for commenting on the unequal distribution of good things in mortal life. Among the wild inhabitants of the heath a murmuring and cavilling tone was assumed, and poverty was made the excuse for the re-appearances of the vices of thieving and drinking—vices, to which, of old, they had been much addicted, but which Lord Singleton had supposed his cares and pains had banished for ever.

Nor was it among the almost heathen population of the heath and Rotherham, that disappointment awaited him. Among his most trusted people in his own village of Barnsley, deception and ingratitude were but too common in these trying times ; and the truth was forcibly impressed upon the minds of all :—
“ Put not your trust in any child of man.”

Almost the greatest disappointment that awaited Lord Singleton, was, however, that which he experienced in Mr. Horner. Some weak people are stirred up by occasions,—and animated by the stimulus of excitement, are borne along in their daily arising duties fearlessly; but occasion served but to perplex Mr. Horner. He was terrified and aghast at the rude speeches he heard, bewildered with the multitude of duties required of him, and far from being a help to the young lord, plunged all things into confusion and difficulty.

To ensure fairness and order, and to prevent that reckless charity, which is so destructive to morality, Lord Singleton had taken upon himself the charge of two soup kitchens in the Rotherham district, and for the same purpose had placed the one on the heath and the one at Barnsley in Mr. Horner's hands. A month after they had been established, complaints assailed Lord Singleton on every side, and in

looking into some of the cases represented, the whole plan of distribution was found to be a mass of confusion. The large families complained they had little; small families were reported to have too much; some were known to come twice in a day for supplies, and this without rebuke or discovery; while some above the pressure of want, and by no means proper recipients of charity, were reported to carry away large quantities and throw it to their pigs. In short, it was discovered that Mr. Horner was in the hands of whosoever pleased to command, or alarm him, and that Lord Singleton's charity was in a fair way of turning the whole population into rogues.

Lord Singleton spoke to him, and received, with his hands passed through his hair as he spoke, a humble and affecting acknowledgement of incapacity. "To be weak, is not so miserable," Carlyle says, "*but to be weaker than our task;*" this was Mr. Horner's case.

The poor man appeared to be verging on idiocy, from utter powerlessness to do what was required of him. The will was there, the power was not. Unwilling to weaken his influence among the people by taking the work out of his hands, Lord Singleton, on this confession, made no change, but promised assistance. The following day, the soup was to be given out in Barnsley, and he promised to be with him early, to assist in settling the whole concern on a new and proper footing.

In the morning, however, Lord Singleton was sent for in much haste, to Rotherham. Some of his workmen there, had struck for higher wages. He was forced to go. He wrote a note to Mrs. Beauchamp, begging her to send Annette to Mr. Horner's assistance, or if it was too cold for Annette, to be so good as to go herself.

The winter was a very severe one, and to Annette's great disappointment and Lord Sin-

gleton's also, Mrs. Beauchamp had been obliged to refuse to let her undertake any duties that required exposure to the air. On this morning, neither Annette nor Mrs. Beauchamp were able to accede to Lord Singleton's request. Even Annette was forced, however reluctantly, to allow the impossibility. Both were suffering from very severe sore throats, at that moment, prevalent in the country.

Zoé was sent to Mr. Beauchamp in his office, to beg him to go. Mr. Beauchamp, it was found, had followed Lord Singleton to Rotherham. Annette was in despair at the disappointment Lord Singleton would feel. She was sorry not to do the good, but to refuse him was the deepest pang. She began to talk of fur cloaks and quick walking, and changing her boots when she got to Barnsley.

"Don't speak thoughtlessly, Annette," said her mother; "I am sorry for the refusal also, but the occasion requires it."

Sybil had been reading in silence until this moment, but at Annette's expression of extreme regret, she suddenly raised her eyes and said—"Shall I go?"

The proposal was received by Annette with surprised delight. She was taken at her word, and could not retract.

"If you really feel equal to the exertion, Miss Moore," said Mrs. Beauchamp, "you will be conferring a favour on Annette and myself, not to speak of Lord Singleton."

"I offered for Annette's sake, for nothing else," Sybil said quickly, and she went.

On arriving at the appointed place,—a large room and kitchen adjoining, set apart for the time being,—she found Mr. Horner in a maze of perplexed misery. The door was thronged with applicants, in no wise gifted with patience or silence, and there he stood in the midst, afraid to refuse their demands—afraid to displease Lord Singleton by compliance—afraid

to act summarily—and equally afraid of yielding to popular clamour. Concession, however, was in his way of dealing, inevitable.

Sybil had a ruling and creative genius. By quick intuition she saw her way, where many minds only learn it by experience, and others, such as Mr. Horner, never learn it at all. Her very presence brought strength and order; confusion disappeared. It was no wonder Mr. Horner looked up to her as to a goddess.

“We had better begin from the very beginning, Mr. Horner,” she said; “act as if it were the first time of giving out, and as if we were strangers here; that will be the only way in which I can help you. Have you some ink and paper? Let us do it all regularly.”

He brought her all she required. She appointed one man to keep the door, and ensure

the regularity she wanted, and, one by one, went into the circumstances of the people. She noted down the number in family, the amount of weekly earnings, and then consulted Mr. Horner on the proper quantity of food to allow. This she wrote on a ticket, with the name of the applicant, informing each one as they presented themselves, that unless the ticket was duly presented on every occasion, no further help would be given.

Nothing could be simpler. It was singular, as Mr. Horner justly observed, that he could have been so perplexed.

The proceedings, from their efficiency, took some time; and when they were over, Sybil hastily copied out the list she had made, for Annette's amusement and information; and before it was done, it was dusk.

She was finishing the last few names, when Lord Singleton entered.

"Well, Annette!" he cried, seeing Mr.

Horner and a lady in the twilight; "how do you get on?"

"It is not Annette," Sybil said, rising quickly. "Neither Annette nor Mrs. Beauchamp are well; and as Annette was much disappointed at not being able to come, I offered to do it instead."

"You have done a most good-natured thing, then," he said, heartily, "and I am a great deal more obliged to you than I can say."

"Miss Beauchamp herself could not have done what Miss Moore has done," observed Mr. Horner. "Her assistance has been invaluable."

"That is not fair, Mr. Horner," Sybil said, laughing. "Miss Beauchamp would probably have done just the same. It is quite enough flattery to say that what I have done, is done well."

"I meant no flattery," he said, warmly;

“ I spoke the truth, and Lord Singleton will say the same.”

He recounted Sybil's simple arrangements with much zest and emphasis.

“ I think the rules are wonderful for you, who had no experience,” Lord Singleton said to Sybil, smiling; “ but, as for the rules themselves; they are only absolutely needful;—with the exception of noting down the quantity of soup to be given to each, they are the same as my own. That is a good thought.—I am extremely obliged to you for the trouble you have taken.”

“ I will go now,” Sybil said; “ it is getting late.”

Mr. Horner, with *empressement*, fetched a cloak she had thrown off, and assisted her to put it on.

Lord Singleton went to the door, and looked out. When he came back, he said, decidedly—

“You must not go home alone, Miss Moore. It is too late.”

“I don’t mind,” she said, as decidedly. “I am never afraid.”

“In general there is no need to be afraid. Just now, I am grieved to say, I don’t feel the confidence in our people I used to feel. There are some bad out-of-work grumblers about. I shall not let you go alone.”

“I shall be very happy to accompany Miss Moore,” said Mr. Horner, eagerly.

“No, no, Mr. Horner,” replied the young lord, sharply enough. “I shall do that myself. Miss Moore, will you be so good as to wait five minutes? Willis is expecting me at the end of the street, and I must just tell him I shall not come.”

He went without waiting for an answer.

Sybil saw he was determined to do it, and wisely acquiesced without resistance. She walked to the door and looked out.

“What a fine moon is rising!” she observed. “I shall like the walk.”

“You will like all things to-day, Miss Moore,” said Mr. Horner; “the mind makes all things, and pleasant reflections will attend you.”

“Well, yes. I am glad to have been useful; but do not make so much of it, or you reproach the whole of my past idle life.”

“I am not likely to do that,” he replied, with warmth. “Silent influence is not waste. If I make much of to-day, it is that I felt the influence more, and sadly acknowledged how wanting I am in the qualities I most admire.”

“You should not be so humble,” Sybil replied, kindly. “You want firmness, nothing more. Why don’t you learn to be firm?”

“Oh! if you would teach me,” he said, fervently.

"I!" replied Sybil, surprised and cold.

"Do you not know you only can? Have you not perceived? Forgive me if I offend, but some feelings cannot be controlled."

"Pray do not speak so, Mr. Horner," Sybil said, withdrawing herself coldly from him. "I have given you no reason."

"I am silenced," he said, sadly and humbly. "I forgot myself strangely. Forgive me if you can."

"There is nothing so very much to forgive," she replied, without unkindness. "Only let us forget such foolish words. How cold it is! Let us walk on, and meet Lord Singleton."

They did so, and he joined them a moment afterwards. Mr. Horner wished them good-night, and they went on together.

"I don't offer you my arm, Miss Moore," Lord Singleton said, "because I fancy you would rather not have it."

“Much rather not,” she replied ; and they went on quickly side by side.

“I ought to apologize for forcing my company upon you without your leave,” he began again, in a moment ; “but my reason was, that I thought Horner seemed rather excited with his admiration to-day. You will be angry with me for saying so, but I must just give you a hint not to be too good-natured to him. You had better not.”

“Thank you, I can take care,” she said, coldly.

He was discreet enough to leave it there. In fact, his mind was occupied with other things ; and having relieved his mind of this piece of advice—which, in truth, had long been burdening it—he recurred to them, and presently expressed his thoughts to Sybil as he would have done to Annette or to any other friendly listener.

“I am thoroughly vexed to-day,” he began.

“Till now, when I have heard people abuse the world, and say what an unsatisfactory, disappointing place it was, I have always thought it was cant and nonsense, or, at least, the faults of those that found it so ; but I begin to change my opinion. I am ready to-day to rail at the world as loudly as anyone. It is an unsatisfactory, disheartening place, and I am heartily tired of it.”

“What has happened to annoy you ?” Sybil asked, with more kindness than usual.

“Nothing has happened to-day, that has not happened every day, in fact ; but patience gets wearied at last, at least, mine does. You know, perhaps, that my workmen struck for higher wages this morning. I have been at Rotherham all day about it. It is a perfectly unreasonable demand, and nothing on earth shall make me give way to it. I raised them when I thought it was right ; now it is not right, and threatening shall never affect me.

I have been arguing with them all day, and such a thankless, ungrateful set, I never met with. I did not lose my temper, I am happy to say, but I could have thrashed them, one and all, with the greatest pleasure."

"They are put up to it, of course, by those few bad men you were speaking of the other day."

"Yes, of course they are. But that is what I complain of. It is the ingratitude that vexes me. What have those brutes done for them that they should trust them, and turn against me. But it is all of a piece everywhere; the boys at the heath school have taken this opportunity, because they know I am harassed, to renew their rebellion about prayers—and you will hardly believe it," he stopped, and laughed, "but I hear, that even in Barnsley, I am reported to make the soup of carrion, to save the expense of butcher's meat. Willis told me."

“I think it is very foolish of Mr. Willis to repeat such idle stories,” Sybil said, warmly.

“Perhaps it is, and more foolish still of me to listen. But you must own I have some reason to be vexed. My whole life of pains and care for these people seems to be wasted. They think no more of me, and care no more for me, than they do for old Hubbard, the miser, who, when his tenants make a complaint, tells them it is no business of his. I have thought of nothing, night or day, but doing my people good, and this is the end of it. I could sell them all, and go to Australia, with joy.”

“Everybody says the same,” Sybil said, with more interest than she usually showed in her communications with him. “Everybody, that is, who tries to be a benefactor. Mankind is ungrateful, and to work for them must be disappointing.”

“That is not a cheerful view of life. What

would you have me work for, if not for mankind?"

"For mankind, but not from the hope of their gratitude, I suppose—"

"Well, I suppose not, either, but to work on under ingratitude, is very bitter. It requires a strong heart."

"Yes, I should think so, and a strong motive, too."

"What motive do you mean?"

"The motive that should guide us all. Something a good deal higher than any wishes or tastes we may have. I suppose that is what supports people when injustice and ingratitude wears them out. I only say I think so. I speak from no practice or experience of my own."

The young lord was silent. He walked on with quick, tramping steps, pondering as he went. At last he slackened his pace, and said—

“Thank you, Miss Moore ; you have done me good, and I wanted it. I was in a very rabid state against my fellow-creatures, but I see what you mean. I act a great deal too much from low, self-pleasing motives. Now my pleasure is pretty well damped, and I believe if I was inclined to give way to my vexation, I should take no more pains, but leave the poor things to their own devices. But I see what you mean ; my duty does not change by their thanklessness. If it were my duty before, it is so now, and I will do it,” he added, somewhat fiercely, striking his stick with violence against a tree that stood in his way. “You shall see.”

Not much more was said, and they arrived at the Cottage in silence. The drawing-room was shut up, and looked as it usually did at that hour, with the exception that Zoé and her tea-table were not yet there. Sybil went upstairs to take off her things. Lord Single-

ton, with his fraternal ease of manner, seated himself by Annette on the sofa, and said—

“I was very sorry, Annette, you could not help me to-day; but, as it has turned out, it did not matter. Miss Moore has covered herself with glory. I never was so surprised in my life, as to find that she was up to the practical matters of this world. You can’t think what good sense and judgment she has shown.”

“I am glad you have found it out, at last,” said Annette, smiling. “You never would believe me, when I told you she was not a common person.”

“Yes, I believed that; I could see that myself. I knew she was clever, but I did not know she was wise.”

“It is often opportunity alone,” observed Mrs. Beauchamp, “that reveals the higher qualities of the mind.”

“And opportunity, Mrs. Beauchamp,” said Lord Singleton, “comes to a great many people, without revealing any qualities at all.

Witness poor Horner. One can hardly conceive a grown man behaving so much like a simpleton. He is utterly unfit for what he has to do. What is to be done with him, I don't know." The young lord fell into a reverie ; it lasted for some minutes, and, by his contracted brow, seemed an unpleasant one. When he woke up he said—" I made a mistake in that appointment, it must be owned. It is all my fault, and I am sorry for it."

" Mr. Horner is certainly unfit for some of the duties of this parish," said Annette, the consoler ; " but he does a great deal of good that nobody talks about, or knows anything about. It is hard to judge of people only by their failures."

" That is very true, my dear Annette," said Lord Singleton, warmly. " Horner is a thorough well-principled man. There is not, there never was anything like vice and wickedness in him. I knew that when I appointed him, and I thought entire trust was

the best thing, after all. But Horner is a fool," he added; "there is no disguising it. Instead of setting himself practically to work, he dreams of fine things—now one, now another. He provoked me out of all patience to-day."

Annette looked up with a smile of intelligence. She always understood his thoughts. He gave her an answering, half-contemptuous, half-amused nod, but said nothing.

"Horner will do better after this shake," said Mr. Beauchamp, drowsily. "It has thoroughly wakened him to his deficiencies, and that is a great step to improvement."

"We will hope so; for, as I am sure nobody will ever make him a bishop, we must bear with him here all our days. I must, at any rate, and learn patience. Well, now, good night," said Lord Singleton, rising reluctantly. "I need not stay till Miss Moore comes down; but you can tell her, if I did not say so, how extremely obliged to her I am for her exertions. Good night."

Annette whispered something to her mother.

Mrs. Beauchamp said—"You would not give us the pleasure of your company at dinner, I suppose, Lord Singleton. We should be very glad if you would."

"You will be dull to-night, with all your troubles," said Annette.

"I should like it of all things," he said,, quickly; "for I am a little out of sorts, I own." Here Sybil entered the room, looking more than commonly bright and lovely. Lord Singleton gazed at her, pondered for a moment—then, as if speaking continuously, added—"But, no, I think not. When a person is out of sorts, it is just as well to meet their discomposure, and fight it out at once. I shall go home and think over my faults; and, I hope, profit by it. Good night. Good night, Miss Moore," he said, approaching and shaking hands with her; "and a thousand thanks for your assistance." And he went.

Sybil sat down in the place Lord Sin-

gleton had left and recounted to Annette the events of the day. The conversation was animated and long. Mr. Beauchamp reclining in his chair half-asleep and half-awake, drowsily contemplated them, and from mere contemplation, his thoughts, by no indirect paths, proceeded to speculate on their fates in life. His admiration for Sybil was great, but his love for Annette made him admire in almost as great a degree her pale face, brightened as it was with the truth and unselfish kindness which characterized her disposition. From those before him his thoughts in the same dreamy manner turned to Lord Singleton, and he meditated on the strangeness of nature, which left him so fancy free, as to be better pleased to pass his evening with his own thoughts, than with such company.

In the midst of these thoughts he fell into a real slumber, and pursuing his meditations in his dreams, he fancied that he made a reproach to Lord Singleton on the coldness of

his heart, to which Lord Singleton replied in a deep and oracular voice—

“Opportunity only reveals the secrets of the mind.”

Excited by the mystery and the manner of the reply, Mr. Beauchamp dreamed that he bent forward to examine the speaker's face, and performing the action with his bodily as well as his visionary powers, he sat up and awoke.

“Who said ‘opportunity reveals?’” he asked, looking around him in a startled, bewildered manner.

“Mamma did, a long while ago,” Annette replied, laughing.

“Oh ! was that all. I thought——no matter, I was in a dream I see.” And he lay down and reposed again.

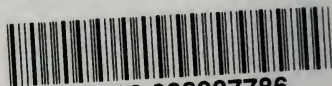
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